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MAY 1996

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Key #27291.

**Circle 219 on reader service card.**

The image features three red, three-dimensional podiums arranged in a row, receding into the distance. The podiums are numbered 1, 2, and 3 from left to right. The number 1 is on the highest podium, number 2 is on the middle one, and number 3 is on the lowest one. The background is a deep blue sky with soft, white clouds. The text "WE QUIETLY WENT AND SET NEW ONES." is overlaid in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font, centered across the middle of the image.

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NEW ONES.





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	Contura 430C	LTE 5000 Model 510	LTE 5100 Model 810	LTE 5200 Model 1350
<b>Processor</b>	100MHz i486™DX4	75MHz Pentium®	90MHz Pentium	120MHz Pentium
<b>Std./Max. Memory</b>	BMB/32MB	BMB/72MB	BMB/72MB	BMB/72MB
<b>Hard Drive</b>	720MB	510MB (removable)	810MB (removable)	1.35GB (removable)
<b>Cache</b>	16KB Internal	256KB, 64-Bit	256KB, 64-Bit	256KB, 64-Bit
<b>Diskette Drive</b>	Internal 3.5" 1.44MB	Modular 3.5" 1.44MB	Modular 3.5" 1.44MB	Modular 3.5" 1.44MB
<b>Display</b>	10.4" Color Dual Scan	10.4" (640x480) CSTN	10.4" (800x600) TFT	10.4" (800x600) TFT
<b>Video Graphics</b>	32-Bit Local Bus	32-Bit PCI Local Bus 1MB DRAM	32-Bit PCI Local Bus 1MB DRAM	32-Bit PCI Local Bus 1MB DRAM
<b>PCMCIA Slots</b>	2 Type II	2 Type II	2 Type II	2 Type II
<b>16-Bit Audio</b>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Internal CD-ROM Drive</b>	N/A	Optional QuadSpeed	Optional QuadSpeed	Optional QuadSpeed
<b>Pointing Device</b>	Optical Trackball	EasyPoint™ II	EasyPoint II	EasyPoint II
<b>NIMH Battery</b>	3-5 Hours	2-4 Hours	2-4 Hours	2-4 Hours
<b>Ports</b>	Keyboard/Pointing Device, Enhanced Parallel, Serial, External SVGA	External Keyboard/Pointing Device, Headphone/Speakers, Microphone, Infrared Communication, External SVGA	External Keyboard/Pointing Device, Headphone/Speakers, Microphone, Infrared Communication, External SVGA	External Keyboard/Pointing Device, Headphone/Speakers, Microphone, Infrared Communication, External SVGA
<b>Software</b>	Windows® 95 or Windows 3.1	Windows 95 or Windows 3.1; MS-Video for Windows, Compaq Sound System	Windows 95 or Windows 3.1; MS-Video for Windows, Compaq Sound System	Windows 95 or Windows 3.1; MS-Video for Windows, Compaq Sound System
<b>Dimensions/Weight</b>	11.9"x 9"x 2.2"/6.5 lbs.	12.2"x 9"x 2"/7.1 lbs.	12.2"x 9"x 2"/7.4 lbs.	12.2"x 9"x 2"/7.4 lbs.
<b>Worldwide Warranty**</b>	3-Year Limited	3-Year Limited	3-Year Limited	3-Year Limited
<b>Price†</b>	<b>\$2,399</b>	<b>\$2,899</b>	<b>\$4,099</b>	<b>\$4,799</b>

<b>Optional Expansion Base</b>	Contura includes a battery charger and separate AC adapter. Interfaces include: serial, enhanced parallel, monitor, numeric keypad, keyboard, mouse, and optional Ethernet. Monitor stand included.		LTE 5000-Modular expansion base allows devices to be shared between the notebook and base. Supports two additional hard drives or CD-ROM drives and additional diskette drive. Includes Integrated Ethernet.	
<b>Price:</b>	Docking Base	<b>\$175</b>	MultiBay Expansion Base	<b>\$489</b>
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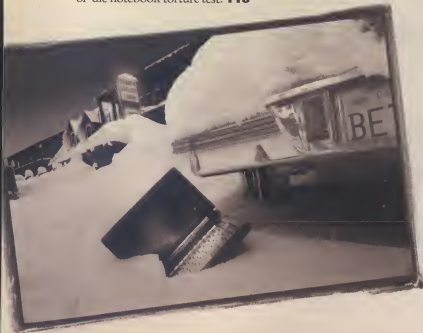


## Internet Power Tools

You won't believe what you can do on the Web! Don't miss our reviews of the top new Web servers, powerful Net utilities, free Netscape extensions, and tools that make designing your own Web pages easy. **58**

### 4th Annual Notebook Torture Test

*Clunk!* Oops. Is your notebook tough enough to survive the hazards of life on the road? Don't buy another portable until you see the results of our no-holds-barred, boot-up-or-die notebook torture test. **110**



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Let's face it: Windows 95 is a big improvement, but it still has plenty of holes. Fill them with our collection of all the tools and utilities Microsoft left out. **134**

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- 1024 x 768 resolution

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- 800 x 600 resolution

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Microsoft®  
Windows® 95



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## NEW TECHNOLOGY

### 133MHz PENTIUM® TECHNOLOGY

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## NEW TECHNOLOGY

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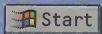
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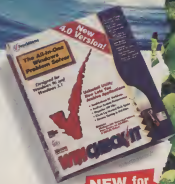
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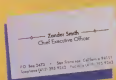
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## Keep Online Equality

Paul Somerson's comments on Internet equality in his March column ("Equal Time," page 57) hit home for me. When I log on to a chat room, the people there are equal, although they may differ in many ways. Some confide they are overwhelmingly shy, and are treated as geeks by their peers. When Somerson mentioned video online, I cringed. Please, let the Internet be an equalizer for just a little bit longer.

MARY KUNTZ  
VIA AMERICA ONLINE

### PCC Psychics

I would like to thank all of the editors and writers at *PC Computing* for being my personal psychics. I was looking to buy a memory-manager program, and then, in your January issue was the review "An End to Out-of-Memory Errors" (page 112). A few weeks later, I was wondering about the difference between Borland's Delphi 2.0 and Microsoft's Visual Basic 4.0, when the article "Build Better 32-Bit Apps" appeared in your March issue (page 115). Maybe you should consider setting up a psychic hot line!

BEN DOLMAN  
MCARTHUR, CALIFORNIA

### Sold on the Web

Although I usually find John C. Dvorak's columns enlightening, he must have had a bad day when he wrote "Web, Schmeb" (March, page 61). His assessment of the World Wide Web's usefulness was harsh, to say the least. I find the Web a helpful tool, both at my job and at home. The Web provides a wonderful world of communication, advertising, knowledge, and yes, junk. However, valuable information is still available for those who search it out. I truly believe that the Web will be a part of everyday life in the future. Dvorak, too, will inevitably fall victim to its lure.

BILL HORTON  
VIA THE INTERNET

### No Free Lunch

I think that John C. Dvorak's comments about the World Wide Web in his March column ("Web, Schmeb," page 61) are right on. With any new technology, there's a lot of fluff and rubbish before things settle into equilibrium. However, I maintain that the one problem with the Internet, and the Web in particular, is the lack of a payment structure. There's no economy involved, and thus no realistic relationship of supply and demand on the Web. Eventually Web financing may follow the advertising model. But in the end, somebody has to pay. There's no free lunch, not even at the Java coffeehouse.

VICTOR ESCOBAR  
VIA THE INTERNET

### Clueless II

In "Web, Schmeb" (March, page 61) John C. Dvorak complains that he can't find drivers for his Toshiba CD-ROM on the World Wide Web. This is a perfect example of what Paul Somerson states in his March column ("Equal Time," page 57). Somerson writes, "When it comes to the Internet, most big companies are clueless." You should add Dvorak's name to the clueless list. While I'm not surprised about Toshiba, I must say that I'm amazed by Dvorak's lack of vision and knowledge when it comes to the Web.

MIKE BEHRENBRINKER  
VIA THE INTERNET

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## Fanning the Flames?

John C. Dvorak's March column ("Web, Schmeb," page 61) must be flame bait. His complaints about the slowness of the Web are just plain silly. I agree the Web is crowded. Here in the East we can tell when people in the West get into the office and log on to the Internet—the Web gets very slow. Still, the Web is a great technology for spreading information. Why does Dvorak care if some people get a little carried away? In time, it'll all settle down, and the 95 percent of Web sites that are worthless will decrease in number.

MARK WILKINS  
VIA COMPUSE

## Always in Style: Privacy

I disagree with your statements on privacy in your March "Radar" (Pulse, page 49). You say, "With the impending telecommunications bill and new FBI wiretap laws, watch what you say and post on the Internet—you can bet everyone else will." Just stating that privacy is out because of this law is like saying we should leave our doors open so the Feds can bust us because we disagree with the president. We should not analyze whether privacy is "in" or "out." Instead, we need to find ways around the telecommunications law to keep enjoying the Internet.

CHRISTOPHER R. KEY  
VIA THE INTERNET

## Chasing Numeric Tails

I want to second Ed Bott's advice to not change the numeric tails in Windows 95 filenames ("Windows 95 Undocumented Secrets," March, page 127). I changed my Registry setting to disable the ~1 tail. Everything was fine until I made a backup tape. To make the tape, my backup program converted long filenames to 8-dot-3 length, then restored them after completing the tape. However, when my backup program restored the filenames, it changed the tails on all the directories that were installed before I edited my Registry. After several Windows protection faults, failed safe-boots, and a bit of cursing, I finally figured out what happened and corrected the problem. Trust me: Getting rid of numeric tails isn't worth the grief.

ED ACHESON  
VIA AMERICA ONLINE

## The Net: Don't Bank on It

I read Adam Meyerson's March column ("Net Cash," page 32) with great interest. In theory online banking sounds rosy. But in my experience it doesn't work all that well. Problems go unresolved. Phone calls aren't returned from banks involved or from Intuit. Checks that are supposed to go out on time don't. This is simply unsatisfactory in this day and age of costly late charges. The concept of online banking is great, but the providers have to actually provide, not just promise. This is not an election of politicians!

SAM HURWITZ  
VIA PRODIGY

### ONLINE BANKING AND BILL PAYING

constitute a great paradigm shift in personal finances, and growing pains are inevitable. Intuit Services Corporation (ISC), which provides services to institutions that have adopted online banking, admits it underestimated initial demand for online-banking services and is actively working on bringing its support services under control. Despite these kinks, the rewards of online banking and bill paying are too important to ignore.

## HTML off the Menu?

In your March review of Netscape's Navigator 2.0 Gold and InContext's Spider 1.1 ("Personal Web Publishers," page 110), you refer to Navigator's two additional menu items that provide HTML-editing abilities. This was true of the Gold beta release, but not of the final release that I installed the other day. I didn't see any explanations for this omission in Navigator, so I just assumed it was removed because of instability. Now that I read it in your review, I'm not so sure. Am I missing something?

BOB JUNKE  
VIA THE INTERNET

### AS THIS ISSUE WENT TO PRESS,

there was still no final release of Navigator 2.0 Gold. You may have the final release of Navigator 2.0, which doesn't have HTML-editing abilities. Navigator 2.0 Gold is a separate product that adds HTML editing to Navigator 2.0.

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Circle 171 on reader service card.

## Next Window for Netscape

I'm confused. In your review of Netscape's Navigator 2.0 Gold ("Personal Web Publishers," March, page 110) you list Windows 3.1 or later as a system requirement. But Netscape's Web site says that Navigator 2.0 Gold is available only in a 32-bit version for Windows 95. What gives? Will it still run under 16-bit Windows 3.1?

DONALD J. BROHM  
VIA THE INTERNET

**YOU'RE RIGHT.** At this time Navigator 2.0 Gold will not run under Windows 3.1. Netscape says that eventually there will be a Windows 3.1 version, but it will appear after Macintosh and Unix versions, and long after Windows 95 and Windows NT versions. We apologize for the misleading information.

## Where in the World Is the Web?

Great review of online services in your February issue ("Online Superguide," page 115). My only comment is that some people are not located in the 48 contiguous states. Some people aren't even in the Western Hemisphere. Which service really handles the first two *w's* of *World Wide Web*? I live in Germany and use both CompuServe and Microsoft Network. In my situation, would America Online be the best? Or is it just the best in the United States?

FRANK W. LESLIE  
VIA COMPUSE

**THAT DEPENDS.** Our story focused on the features and usability of each major online service. If you can't dial in with a local call, a regional Internet service provider such as Europe's Video OnLine may suit your needs. But for reliable online service on any continent, CompuServe is still the best choice—although a pricey one.

## Ten-speed CDs

In your February Pulse section, I read a remark about ten-speed CD-ROM drives, and how we won't see many CDs take advantage of that speed ("PCC's Crystal Ball," page 46). Doesn't the speed of a drive affect its performance? The faster the

speed, the quicker the drive will read data, regardless of the recording speed and density. Are you saying that CDs of the near future won't be recorded at a faster speed? What "full advantage" could a CD take?

ROBERT F. MCCLURE  
BYRON, NEW YORK

**RECORDING SPEED** doesn't matter with straight data, but with flashy content like video, it makes a difference. If we all bought ten-speed drives tomorrow, CDs would be mastered at that speed to provide higher-quality video and more complex content. But since most drives today don't approach that speed, manufacturers make CDs for the lowest common denominator.

## ISDN Window Pains

What were you were thinking in your February review, when you tested 3Com's Impact ISDN modem and U.S. Robotics' Courier I-Modem on Windows 95? ("Double-Duty Digital Modems," page 78.) Anyone using an ISDN modem certainly would want to use it under a fast, Internet-ready operating system like Unix. It's my experience that Windows products seriously degrade the speed of 14.4Kbps and 28.8Kbps modems. I certainly can't imagine how much bandwidth you would lose when running 64Kbps modems under Windows 95.

JOSHUA GILBERT  
VIA THE INTERNET

**WE FOUND** no noticeable performance hit when we tested digital modems with Windows 95. However, we don't recommend using ISDN with Windows 3.1, which will handicap performance. And while digital modems run faster under Unix, it means sacrificing usability for speed.

## Apple of the I-Way

My wife and I like to shop at places that offer different, gourmet, or hard-to-find foods. We found an online-shopping site that we'd like to share. It's called Apples-n-Such, and it sells some of the best dried fruits we've eaten. Plus, the service is quick. I'm partial to the Red Delicious apples it

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To The  
Internet.





offers. And if you're an apple lover, you would be, too. The site is located at [www.kokodir.com/Apples.html](http://www.kokodir.com/Apples.html).

JERRY FRENCH  
VIA AMERICA ONLINE

## Bad Form for Filing

You mentioned in your March issue that you can download tax forms from the Internal Revenue Service's Web site ("Net Cash," page 32). This is true, but not all of them can be used for filing purposes, such as

the 1099 form you mentioned. The 1099 and other forms are machine-readable, so copies printed from a PC are for information purposes only. We all know by now that nothing from the IRS is that easy!

BRAD BIONDO  
VIA COMPU SERVE

## Spend for Modem Speed

Many people blame their phone company for slow connection speeds, but the problem may very well be that they bought a

cheap modem. I researched modems before buying one, and I'm satisfied with my modem's performance. I routinely connect to Microsoft Network at 24Kbps, and nearly half the time I connect at 26Kbps. On the other hand, when I connect to a friend who lives down the street and has a cheaper modem, I'm lucky to connect at 24Kbps. My advice: Spend the extra money to get a quality modem. It will quickly pay for itself in the time you save online.

RON FRAZIER  
VIA MICROSOFT NETWORK

## Get the best when you're preparing for the worst



<http://www.apcc.com>  
[apcinfo@apcc.com](mailto:apcinfo@apcc.com)

800-800-4APC

Circle 186 on reader service card.

Dept. E7

## Out of Luck with AOL

While you're correct in your response to Nathaniel Rabbin's letter about America Online's multitasking interface ("AOL for MVP?" February, page 43), I question whether America Online has rich content. I use CompuServe now, but in the last year and a half I signed up for America Online three times. I agree that for an average user interested in e-mail, America Online works fine. However, if you're a technical person and need some real content, like new drivers or a patch to a program, you're out of luck with America Online. I gave it several chances, and it flunked every time.

FRANK PUCCI  
VIA COMPU SERVE

## For the Record

In our January review "Picture-perfect Telecommunications" (page 90), we gave an incorrect frame rate for Connectix's VideoPhone. The correct frame rate ranges from 2 to 20 fps, depending on whether it's transmitting via a LAN, or via an analog or ISDN modem.

In our March feature "Windows 95 Undocumented Secrets" (page 130), the Web address to download the Tweak UI applet should have been listed as [www.microsoft.com/windows/download/powertoy.exe](http://www.microsoft.com/windows/download/powertoy.exe).

CAN MICROSOFT CONQUER the Internet? Send your thoughts about this and other subjects to Mail, *PC Computing*, 950 Tower Lane, 19th Floor, Foster City, CA 94404; fax: (415) 578-7059; Internet: 72241.1724@compuserve.com; or CompuServe: 72241,1724. Letters are subject to editing for length and clarity.



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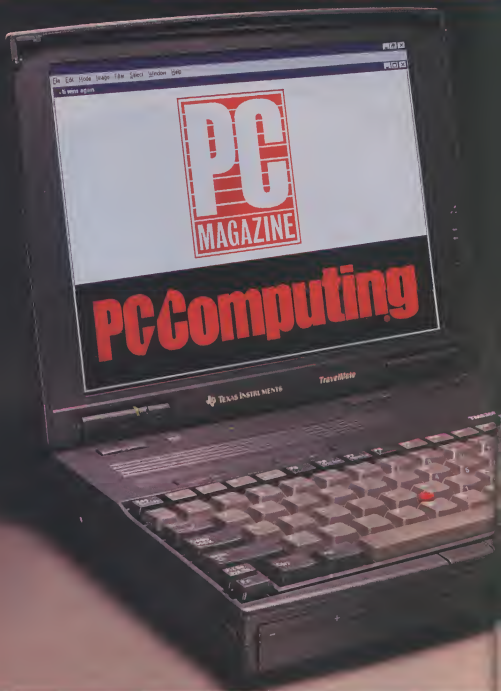
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# Pulse

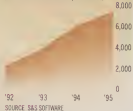
## Cable Modems,

### MODEM BREAKTHROUGH

## Bandwidth Busters

#### Virus Outbreak

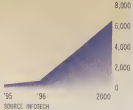
(number of floppies with computer viruses)



**Bugs in Full Bloom:** The total number of computer viruses increased by 23 percent last year, thanks to new macro viruses that spread through text documents.

#### Hybrid Software

(number of mixed-media titles)



**On Disc and Online:** Hybrid-software popularity is expected to skyrocket—it offers the best of both worlds, merging CD-ROM and Internet resources into one package.

#### Handheld-PC Sales

(sales in millions)



**More Than a Handful:** Sales of smart phones, PDAs, and other handheld communication devices will increase steadily in the next four years.

Streaming video, real-time audio, and live animations are quickly becoming the rule rather than the exception on many Web pages. The downside to all this razzle-dazzle? It leaves most of us drumming our fingers waiting for the data to slowly drip through a 28.8Kbps modem.

Fortunately, there's relief on the horizon. Connected with the cable-television line already installed in your house, cable modems will provide lightning-fast Net surfing speeds—more than 100 times faster than a 28.8Kbps modem, with data throughput speeds of up to 27Mbps. The result? Fully interactive real-time video and sound—and no more waiting around.

Best of all, cable is cheap. Although cable modems will initially be available for lease only through your cable operator, retail prices for cable modems are expected to start at around \$300 once standards have been set. Watch for the first standard cable modems by the end of the year.

Upgrading from your current modem to a cable modem is like trading in your roller skates for a rocket ship. So why not sign up today? There are a couple of big hurdles to clear. More than 90 percent of the cable lines in the United States are set up to receive only—you can't send information via cable. Therefore, the cable network must be upgraded to accommodate two-way connections—a task most cable companies say they'll complete by the end of the year. But regardless of how long it takes to upgrade the network, interim cable solutions are already available. General Instruments' Surf-board cable modem, for example, lets you download data at cable speeds, and send information through a regular analog phone line or 28.8Kbps modem—

**Hooked on Cable:** Using cable TV lines to link to the Internet, cable modems are more than 100 times faster than 28.8Kbps modems.

## UPDATES Best Bets and Bargains

#### UNDER BUDGET

Starting at just \$2,799, Sharp's new PC-3080 Pentium notebook packs in high-end options for a low-end price. Contact Sharp at (800) 237-4277.

Reader Service No. 601

#### PERSONAL TOUCH

Xerox's DocuPrint 4508 black-and-white laser printer sports an 8-ppm engine and 600-dpi output for just \$695. Contact Xerox at (800) 349-3769.

Reader Service No. 602

#### COMPLETE NET KIT

Get everything you need to surf the Internet—a V.34 modem, two books, and dozens of special offers—with Logicore's \$169 Net Kit. Contact Logicore at (800) 735-6442.

Reader Service No. 603

#### MULTIMEDIA MASTER

The RasterMedia PCI card (\$399) offers a complete multimedia fix with its MPEG video and wavetable sound. Contact ConnectWare at (800) 357-0852.

Reader Service No. 604

# the Perfect Ultraportable

perfect for surfing the Web. Hewlett-Packard, Intel, and Apple are also developing cable modems.

Another big hurdle for cable modems is the lack of an industry-wide cable standard. Expect a bumpy ride for a while as competing companies battle for cable standards for the Internet. But even with standards, not every server on the Internet is likely to jump on the bandwagon right away. Given the cost of upgrading a server, many companies won't make the leap to cable for quite some time, opting instead to live with their current, slower connections.

In the meantime, most manufacturers are selling their cable modems only to cable providers, which in turn lease them to subscribers. Comcast, the third-largest cable company in the United States, recently announced a plan to lease cable modems to customers and give them unlimited Internet access for about \$25 a month.

Some analysts speculate that when that happens, users will be bombarded with commercials, complements of the cable company, when they first sign on. Others expect cable companies to provide only limited Internet connections—letting users access just the cable company's preferred clients, such as CNN and NBC.

Is cable the way to go? Its future is bright: It's faster than ISDN, the network is already in place, and it will be fairly inexpensive. The only remaining obstacle is availability. Depending on where you live, the cable-modem rollout is likely to be a slow process. JL

## Sharper Pocket PDA

The new and improved **Zaurus ZR-5800FX** PDA, due from **Sharp Electronics** by midyear, offers a bundle of communication muscle. In addition to 2MB of memory, you get a built-in **spreadsheet**, **CompuServe Companion** mail retrieval, a 28.8Kbps fax modem, and **Motorola's cellular paging** support. The price hasn't been set, but look for something in the \$700 range. **rs**

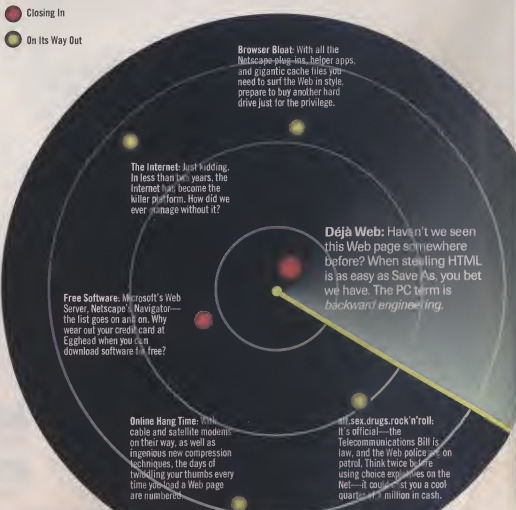
**Zaurus ZR-5800FX** / Sharp Electronics / (800) 237-4277 / price not available / Reader Service No. 605

## RADAR: HTML Piracy, 200MB Web Browsers

What's on the scope? If a blip is near or moving toward the middle of the radar screen, check it out. If it's moving off the screen, steer clear for now.

● Closing In

● On Its Way Out



## Document Scanners

Tackle that paper pile by scanning it into your PC. Here are the least expensive black-and-white document scanners we could find as of March 1.

Product	Price
Mustek TwainScan First Source (800) 838-9866	\$92
Microtek PageWiz Computer Discount Warehouse (800) 386-4239	\$196
Primat PaperEase Computer Marketplace (800) 950-2671	\$197
Visioneer PaperPort 2.0 PC Complete (800) 669-4727	\$275
Umax Page Office Insight Direct (800) 377-3000	\$299

Readers Service Numbers: First Source, 606; Computer Discount Warehouse, 607; Computer Marketplace, 608; PC Complete, 609; Insight Direct, 610.

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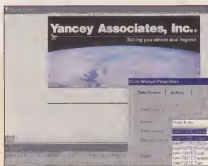
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## Hot Off the Web

Hot new Internet products are arriving by the truckload, with more on the way. Here's a sneak peek at some promising new Internet products due in coming months.

**Backstage** Create and maintain Web pages with iband's Backstage. Along with a nifty HTML editor, it includes a database query tool and a bulletin-board application. With Backstage, you just drag and drop these tools onto your page.

**HahtSite** Haht Software's HahtSite is ideal for developing and maintaining complex Web sites that connect to large SQL databases. HahtSite includes its own scripting language and graphical page editor. While it's aimed at first-time Web publishers, its programmability and support for large databases make it an attractive choice for experienced developers as well.

**Webster** ViewCall America's Webster is about the size and shape of a VCR. It plugs into your TV, connects to the Web over standard phone lines, and has extra ports for expansion devices such as a keyboard (which isn't included). Webster will be available in the coming months and should cost less than \$300.

**TransPhone** Taking a different Web-appliance approach, TransPhone is a combination telephone, Internet terminal, and credit-card reader. The TransPhone looks like a fax machine, but the keypad flips back to reveal a small grayscale LCD and a keyboard. TransPhone also provides Internet access via its own Citrix servers. **DT**

**Backstage** / iband / price not available / (408) 374-4086 / Reader Service No. 611

**HahtSite** / Haht Software / \$695 est. street price / (800) 986-3222 / Reader Service No. 612

**Webster** / ViewCall America / price not available / (770) 728-2529 / Reader Service No. 613

**TransPhone** / TransPhone / price not available / (800) 872-0809 / Reader Service No. 614

## Add Texture to Your Web Site

FutureTense's **Texture** may be the most innovative publishing tool for the Web. Moving away from HTML, the new Java-based authoring tool gives content publishers complete control over page layouts with its proprietary layout and markup language, which incorporates **Bitstream's TrueDoc technology** to embed fonts and graphics in documents. Texture also automatically updates content at **scheduled intervals**. And, unlike Adobe's popular Acrobat technology, Texture doesn't require separate plug-ins. If you have a **Java-enabled browser**, you'll be publishing on the Web in no time.

**Texture** / FutureTense / \$495 est. street price / (508) 371-3445 / Reader Service No. 615



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### Rave Reviews!

"the results are astonishing... Get one—you'll love it"

—PC Magazine

"produces terrific video stills... the best we've ever seen"

—Windows Sources

"For the first time, you can get print-quality images from video"

—Camcorder Magazine

### Hot Awards!



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## Future Phones

Video teleconferencing is an iffy business. Screaming into your QuickCam and squinting at the grainy postage-stamp-size video of your conversation partner isn't the most effective way to communicate. And configuring your system for video teleconferencing is no walk in the park either.

By taking the PC out of the equation, British Telecom's Portrait 9000 delivers an all-in-one solution—a telephone, camera, microphone, and LCD in one unit. Think of it as an ISDN video phone on steroids. Just hook it up to your ISDN line and you're ready to go—no fussing with ISDN configurations or confusing drivers. But the price tag may make you see red: Expect to pay around \$4,000 for each phone.

The Portrait 9000 offers full-color video teleconferencing on its 6-inch monitor. It also stores up to 100 names and numbers for automatic dialing, keeps a missed-calls log, and allows hands-free operation. A special add-on lets you videotape your conversations with a VCR. Finally, with the Portrait 9000's included data port, you can automatically link to your PC and download files.

The hefty price tag aside, frequent business travelers will likely save money with the Portrait 9000, assuming the people they need to call also have a Portrait phone. In Europe, where ISDN is much cheaper and more widely used, that scenario is far more likely. For remote offices that need to communicate frequently, the Portrait 9000 is a good solution. And because ISDN phones are entirely digital, the voice and video quality are superb. **JL**

**Portrait 9000** / British Telecommunications /  
\$4,000 est. street price / (800) 776-6286 /  
Reader Service No. 616

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## Weave Video into the Web

Adobe's Premiere 4.2 for Windows video-editing software gets a **major speed boost** by going 32-bit. Premiere is **twice as fast** as the previous version. It also **cranks out video clips** that include 8kHz audio and use as little as 4K of disk space—ideal for embedding video into Web pages. In addition to helpful editing features such as new filters and a frame-cropping tool, the program comes with VDOnet's **VDOLive Personal Server**. **JL**

Premiere 4.2 for Windows / Adobe Systems / \$795 list, \$49 upgrade / (800) 842-3623 / Reader Service No. 617



## Easy Web Publishing

It's no secret that the World Wide Web has spawned a publishing revolution. The latest news is that updated versions of your old desktop-publishing and graphics tools are making it a cinch to publish on the Web.

**QuarkImmedia** If you're an old hand at QuarkXPress, Quark's new QuarkImmedia (above) allows for the easiest multimedia authoring around. The program uses the QuarkXPress interface, but adds interactive buttons for multimedia basics like sound, video, and animation. With QuarkImmedia there's no scripting, and you can publish old QuarkXPress files on the Web. Quark also offers a free viewer, so anyone on the Web can see your creations. QuarkImmedia will be available in June.

**FrameMaker+SGML** Sharing large documents over the Web is simple with Adobe's new FrameMaker+SGML. It's ideal for creating complex, long documents like books and manuals, and its SGML support makes it compatible with any platform. The new version also includes an HTML filter that makes publishing on the Web a snap.

**Shockwave for FreeHand** Mimicking Macromedia's Shockwave for Director, Shockwave for FreeHand lets you publish FreeHand images on the Web. Use the program's tools to create interactive hot spots of any shape or size. The plug-in also lets you zoom in on images, create text columns, and wrap text around objects. **JL**

**QuarkImmedia** / Quark / price not available / (800) 788-7835 / Reader Service No. 726

**FrameMaker+SGML** / Adobe Systems / \$1,495 est. street price / (800) 842-3623 / Reader Service No. 727

**Shockwave for FreeHand** / Macromedia / free / (800) 470-7211 / Reader Service No. 728

*Contributors to Pulse:* KYLA K. CARLSON, JULIE MCCULLOUGH, RICH SCHWERIN, WENDY TAYLOR, DYLAN TWENEY.  
*Edited by* JACK LYON.

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# The A-List

Editors' Top Picks by Wendy Taylor

	Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*	More Info
Systems	High-Performance Pentium	Dell Dimension XPS P166c	<b>So fast you may never see the Windows hourglass again. It's priced for mortals, too.</b>	\$3,549, 166MHz Pentium, 16MB RAM, 1.2GB, 6X CD-ROM. March 1996, page L3; (800) 433-2318 Reader Service No. 618
	High-Performance Pentium Pro	Hewlett-Packard Vectra XU 6/150	<b>Power that will rock you back on your heels. Feed it native 32-bit apps only.</b>	\$5,000, 150MHz Pentium Pro, 32MB RAM, 2.1GB hard drive. March 1996, page L4; (800) 752-0900 Reader Service No. 619
	Desktop Workhorse	Micron Electronics P133 Millennia	<b>The sweet spot for systems: the performance you crave and all the extras, too.</b>	\$2,798, 133MHz Pentium, 16MB RAM, 1.6GB, 6X CD-ROM. Sept. 1995, page 106 (800) 515-9197 Reader Service No. 620
	Low-Cost Desktop PC	Dell Dimension P100T	<b>Priced so low even your cheapest relatives will bite.</b>	\$2,199, 100MHz Pentium, 16MB RAM, 1GB, 4X CD-ROM. Jan. 1996, page 132 (800) 433-6675 Reader Service No. 621
	SOHO System	Compaq Presario 9240	<b>Command central for any home office—manages your fax, voice, and e-mail messages while you get down to work.</b>	\$3,647, 133MHz Pentium, 16MB RAM, 1.2GB hard drive. This issue, page B3 (800) 345-1518 Reader Service No. 622
	High-Performance Workstation	IBM RS/6000	<b>Workstation might meets Pentium prices in this PowerPC rocket.</b>	\$7,425 133MHz PowerPC 604, 32MB RAM, 1GB hard drive. Stay tuned (800) 472-7693 Reader Service No. 623
Network Servers	Price-wise Direct System	Polywell Poly 500P8	<b>A great dollar value—delivered right to your doorstep.</b>	\$2,698, 133MHz Pentium, 16MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM drive. Jan. 1996, page 132 (800) 999-1278 Reader Service No. 624
	Small Business Server	Compaq ProSignia 300 5/90	<b>Who needs an information systems department? This server is so well designed, it runs itself.</b>	\$4,128, 90MHz Pentium, 32MB RAM, 2GB hard drive. Nov. 1995, page 138 (800) 345-1518 Reader Service No. 625
	Small Business Server	Digital Priors LX 590	<b>Our labs call it the fastest server to hit our test bench; we call it a great deal.</b>	\$3,249, 90MHz Pentium, 192MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM drive. Dec. 1995, page 158 (800) 344-4825 Reader Service No. 626
	Small Business Server	Compaq ProLiant 1500	<b>A reliable anchor for 15 or more network nodes.</b>	\$14,375, 100MHz Pentium, 128MB RAM, two 2.1GB SCSI-2 drives. Nov. 1995, page 138 (800) 345-1518 Reader Service No. 627
	Small Business Server	Hewlett-Packard NetServer 5/133 LS2	<b>Two onboard processors and loaded with technical wizardry.</b>	\$25,095, two 133MHz Pentium CPUs, 768MB, five 2.1GB SCSI drives. March 1996, page 158 (800) 322-4772 Reader Service No. 628
	Small Business Server	Hewlett-Packard NetServer 5/133 LS2	<b>Two onboard processors and loaded with technical wizardry.</b>	\$25,095, two 133MHz Pentium CPUs, 768MB, five 2.1GB SCSI drives. March 1996, page 158 (800) 322-4772 Reader Service No. 628
Portables	Portable Desktop Replacement	Toshiba Tecra 700CT	<b>The follow-you-around office: 120MHz Pentium, removable four-speed CD-ROM drive, and an 11.3-inch hi-res display.</b>	\$5,999, 120MHz Pentium, 8MB RAM, 1.13GB hard drive. March 1996, page 68 (800) 999-4273 Reader Service No. 629
	Lightweight Traveling Notebook	Toshiba Portégé 610CT	<b>Take it anywhere: This 4.8-pound ultraportable notebook fits in any briefcase—with room to spare.</b>	\$3,999, 90MHz Pentium, 8MB RAM, 686MB hard drive. Dec. 1995, page 158 (800) 999-4273 Reader Service No. 630
	Low-Cost Color Portable	Texas Instruments Extensa Model 450	<b>All the extras of Dell's Latitude and Toshiba's Satellite—let the price wars begin!</b>	\$1,798, 75MHz 486DX4, 8MB RAM, 340MB hard drive. March 1996, page 282 (800) 848-3927 Reader Service No. 631
	Multimedia Notebook	NEC Versa 4050C	<b>A quick-change artist for the road: Swap the four-speed CD-ROM drive for a hard drive, battery, or floppy drive.</b>	\$4,499, 90MHz Pentium, 8MB RAM, 810MB hard drive. This issue, page 110 (800) 632-4636 Reader Service No. 632
	State-of-the-art Portable	IBM ThinkPad 760CD	<b>If James Bond carried a portable, this would be it. It packs more features than your average desktop PC.</b>	\$6,889, 120MHz Pentium, removable 4X CD-ROM drive. March 1996, page 183 (800) 426-7255 Reader Service No. 633

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# The A-List

Continued on page 46

	Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*	More Info
Desktop Printers	Desktop Laser Printer	Hewlett-Packard LaserJet 5MP	<b>You can buy a faster laser, but not a better one. Plus, who needs cables? Beam jobs to the IR port instead.</b>	\$950, 6 ppm, 600 dpi, PCL 5 (PostScript optional), infrared port. Dec. 1995, page 158 (800) 752-0900 Reader Service No. 634
	Low-Cost Color Printer	Canon BJC-4100	<b>Low-maintenance, high-quality color—and sanity priced.</b>	\$349, 720-by-360-dpi black, 360-by-360-dpi color. Feb. 1996, page 140 (800) 848-4123 Reader Service No. 635
	Desktop Color Printer	Hewlett-Packard DeskJet 855C	<b>Near-laser-quality color output for a tenth of the price.</b>	\$449, 600 dpi, 7-ppm black, 3-ppm color. Feb. 1996, page 140 (800) 752-0900 Reader Service No. 636
	Portable Printer	Citizen PN60	<b>Slip it in your briefcase, then wow clients when you produce color pages on the spot.</b>	\$299, 300-dpi thermal transfer, 1.5 pounds. Feb. 1996, page 64 (310) 453-0614 Reader Service No. 637
Network Printers	Network Laser Printer	Hewlett-Packard LaserJet 5Si MX	<b>Even 50-page print jobs fly out faster than you can trot down the hall to claim them.</b>	\$4,000, 24 ppm, 600 dpi, PCL 5e, PostScript Level 2. Jan. 1996, page 89 (800) 752-0900 Reader Service No. 638
	Network Color Printer	Tektronix Phaser 340	<b>Drop-dead, solid-ink color at just 11 cents per page.</b>	\$4,995, 4 ppm, 600-by-300-dpi black and color. Dec. 1995, page 158 (800) 835-6100, ext. 1253 Reader Service No. 639
	Network Color Printer	Hewlett-Packard DeskJet 1600CM	<b>Churns out brilliant color pages quicker than you can produce them.</b>	\$1,999, 9-ppm black, 4-ppm color. Stay tuned. (800) 752-0900 Reader Service No. 640
Video	High-Resolution 20- or 21-inch Monitor	Nanao FlexScan T2-20	<b>It's like buying orchestra seats for Windows—and worth every penny.</b>	\$1,989, 20-inch, 1,600 by 1,200 pixels, Plug and Play. Dec. 1995, page 158 (800) 800-5202 Reader Service No. 641
	High-Resolution 17-inch Monitor	Sony Multiscan 17sf	<b>Sweet 17-inch deal. Makes Windows look great, too.</b>	\$800, 1,280 by 1,024 pixels at 60Hz. Dec. 1995, page 158 (800) 352-7669, ext. 119 Reader Service No. 642
	High-Resolution Graphics Accelerator	Matrox MGA Millennium	<b>Ultrafast Windows RAM and 3-D acceleration make this the graphics accelerator to covet.</b>	\$450, 4MB WRAM, 1,280 by 1,024 pixels at 76Hz, PCI interface. Dec. 1995, page 158 (800) 583-4353 Reader Service No. 643
Storage	Removable Storage	Iomega Zip Drive	<b>Chic, purple, and portable. And the cartridges are removable.</b>	\$199, 25MB or 100MB cartridges, SCSI or parallel interface. Feb. 1996, page 175 (800) 697-8833 Reader Service No. 644
	CD-ROM Drive	NEC MultiSpin 4Xc	<b>The best bargain around: Queue up seven discs in this quad-speed jukebox for the price of a single-disc drive.</b>	\$349, SCSI interface, seven-disc changer. Dec. 1995, page 158 (800) 632-4636 Reader Service No. 645
	Hard Drive	Seagate Medalist 2140	<b>Be greedy. At these prices, why not get two?</b>	\$530, Fast ATA-2, 10.5ms access time, 2.51GB storage. Stay tuned. (408) 438-8111 Reader Service No. 646
	Network Storage	Mega Drive Systems MR5 RAID Disk Array	<b>The best kind of insurance for your network data.</b>	\$9,500, 5GB RAID array. Nov. 1995, page 186 (800) 404-6342 Reader Service No. 647
Peripherals	Personal Scanner	Visioneer PaperPort Vx	<b>The quickest way to tame your paper in-box—moves paper off your desk and onto your hard drive in seconds.</b>	\$329, 400 dpi, document-management software. Jan. 1996, page 92 (800) 787-7007, ext. 102 Reader Service No. 648
	Multimedia Sound Card	Creative Labs Sound Blaster AWE32 PnP	<b>The ultimate for business multimedia. Also great for games.</b>	\$200, 32-voice polyphony, 16-bit DSP. Jan. 1996, page 173 (800) 998-5227 Reader Service No. 649
	High-speed Fax Modem	U.S. Robotics Courier I-Modem	<b>A bridge to the future—got a 28.8Kbps analog and ISDN modem in one.</b>	\$650, ISDN and V.34 (28.8Kbps). Feb. 1996, page 78 (800) 877-2677 Reader Service No. 650

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# The A-List

Continued from page 44

	Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*	More Info	
Desktop Applications	Software Suite	Microsoft Office for Windows 95	<b>If you can buy just one software title, this should be it. Watch for Web-publishing wizards soon.</b>	\$399 (Standard Edition), 28MB to 89MB hard disk space.	Sept. 1995, page 83 (800) 426-9400 Reader Service No. 651
	Word Processor	Microsoft Word for Windows 95	<b>The de facto standard for businesses everywhere. For smart version control, check out Lotus's Word Pro.</b>	\$130, Windows 95 or Windows NT 3.51, 8MB RAM.	This issue page 149 (800) 426-9400 Reader Service No. 652
	Spreadsheet	Microsoft Excel for Windows 95	<b>It's a one-horse race, folks, and guess who's winning?</b>	\$300, Windows 95 or Windows NT 3.51, 8MB RAM.	Dec. 1995, page 158 (800) 426-9400 Reader Service No. 653
	Database	Microsoft Access for Windows 95	<b>Finally! You don't have to be a power nerd to put this database to work.</b>	\$300, 486 CPU, 12MB RAM.	Jan. 1996, page 162 (800) 426-9400 Reader Service No. 654
Business Applications	Microsoft PowerPoint for Windows 95	<b>Build a winning sales presentation on your lunch hour.</b>	\$300, Windows 95 or Windows NT, 14MB to 35MB hard disk space.	March 1996, page 183 (800) 426-9400 Reader Service No. 655	
	Microsoft Publisher for Windows 95	<b>The ultimate vanity press: Create terrific-looking pages without even trying.</b>	\$80, 386 CPU, 8MB RAM, 6MB hard disk space.	Dec. 1995, page 158 (800) 426-9400 Reader Service No. 656	
	QuarkXPress 3.31 for Windows	<b>Produces pages as slick as the ones in your hands. PageMaker shops should check out PageMaker for Windows 95.</b>	\$550, 486 CPU, 8MB RAM, 12MB to 15MB hard disk space.	Dec. 1995, page 158 (800) 788-7835 Reader Service No. 657	
	CorelDraw 6	<b>The all-in-one graphics toolkit for Windows 95: Draw, edit, and design your own masterpieces.</b>	\$450, Windows 95, 486 CPU, 8MB RAM.	April 1996, page 101 (800) 772-6735 Reader Service No. 658	
	Adobe Photoshop 3.0 for Windows	<b>A digital darkroom for your PC. Just in: a Windows 95/Windows NT upgrade.</b>	\$549, 486 CPU, 8MB RAM, 20MB hard disk space.	April 1996, page 101 (800) 833-6687 Reader Service No. 659	
Finance	Personal Finance	Intuit Quicken Deluxe 5 for Windows	<b>Never visit a bank again—this is branch-office checking from your hard drive.</b>	\$49, 386 CPU, 4MB RAM, 7MB hard disk space.	Feb. 1996, page 159 (800) 624-8742 Reader Service No. 660
	Business Accounting	Intuit QuickBooks Pro 4.0	<b>Cheaper than your average accountant, and a lot easier to understand.</b>	\$160, 486 CPU, 4MB RAM, 12MB hard disk space.	Feb. 1996, page 92 (800) 624-8742 Reader Service No. 661
Communications	Fax-Communications Software	Detrina CommSuite 95	<b>One launchpad for all your Internet needs. Sends e-mail and faxes, too.</b>	\$79, 486 CPU, 8MB RAM, 30MB hard disk space.	Nov. 1995, page 83 (800) 441-7234 Reader Service No. 662
	Web Browser	Netscape Navigator 2.0	<b>Still the best way to explore the Web. Download the latest version from ftp://ftp.netscape.com.</b>	\$49, Windows 95, 4MB RAM, Internet access.	Jan. 1996, page 108 (800) 638-7483 Reader Service No. 663
Tools and Utilities	Antivirus Software	Symantec Norton AntiVirus for Windows 95	<b>Fast and painless virus-hunting for Windows 95.</b>	\$79, Windows 95, 486 CPU, 8MB RAM.	Oct. 1995, page 116 (800) 441-7234 Reader Service No. 664
	Project-Management Software	Microsoft Project for Windows 95	<b>Takes the work out of teamwork—the easy way.</b>	\$469, Windows 95, 386 CPU, 20MB hard disk space.	Dec. 1995, page 158 (800) 426-9400 Reader Service No. 665
	System Utility	Symantec Norton Utilities for Windows 95	<b>Resuscitates dead files and diagnoses hardware problems before they happen. Everyone should have a copy.</b>	\$90, Windows 95, 486 CPU, 8MB RAM.	Dec. 1995, page 158 (800) 441-7234 Reader Service No. 666
	Reference	Vicarious Our Times	<b>The best crash course in 20th-century history we've ever taken. Don't miss it.</b>	\$50, Windows 3.1, 486 CPU, 8MB RAM, CD-ROM.	Feb. 1996, page 301 (800) 465-6543 Reader Service No. 667

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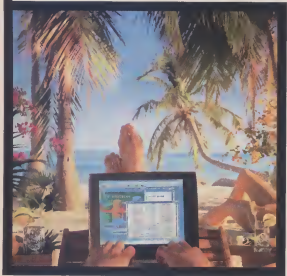
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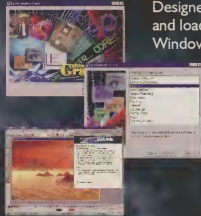
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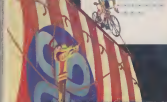
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## FIRE SALE

**P**ssst—wanna buy an online service, cheap? The market's flooded with them. Since the beginning of this year, nervous owners have raced to dump CompuServe, Prodigy, Interchange, Delphi, and GEnie. Microsoft has pulled back on MSN, and Apple's eWorld is history. But hold on a sec. Weren't these I-Waystations supposed to be so lucrative that investors were **WIPING THEIR NOSES WITH \$100 BILLS?**

Well, yes. But these guys all missed the boat. In fact, they never even made it down to the docks.

Some of this collapse was the result of the new Telecommunications Act, which turned the electronic spectrum into a high-tech pie fight and raised the specter of **POLICE-STATE THUGGERY** by nosy government censors. Some of it was the frenzied competition for subscribers, and the fear of lawsuits like the frivolous \$200 million doozy against Prodigy.

But the truth is that these online services did themselves in. Most had truly awful interfaces. They made it far too hard to find anything or navigate properly. They didn't offer enough high-quality content. They were pricey. Some did **TRULY BONEHEADED THINGS** like discouraging e-mail. And they treated the Web as just another feature rather than the main event.

No offense, but do you really want an online service from Sears Roebuck? Now those guys can't even give their half of Prodigy away. They displayed the same kind of **NEGLECTFUL DIGITAL VAMPIRISM** that sucked a market leader like WordPerfect dry. The Sears-IBM marriage was as bizarre as anything ever performed on stadiums full of strangers by Sun Myung Moon.

America Online is thriving because it has vision (lining up and paying for content),

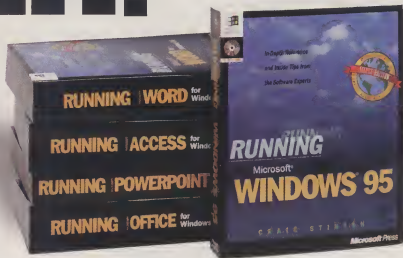
usability (a fairly attractive, easy-to-use interface), and plenty of marketing muscle. It also has critical mass. Until recently, "e-mail me" meant "here's my CompuServe number." Now most electronic addresses end with @aol.com.

And AOL realizes the importance of Web access. But it's still a little rocky there. Online services have to **MAKE THE INTERNET KING**. Here's what they'll need:

- High-speed 800-number connections with no busy signals (or slow servers)
- A browser that has tools like Java, ShockWave, and RealAudio already loaded, and that adds new ones automatically
- Smart, simple, powerful search and indexing mechanisms
- Their own deep, rich Web sites that offer help, instant ruby-slippers navigation, and seductive original content
- Cost-plus pricing that encourages use
- Foolproof security and no-worry commerce
- Simple parental controls but otherwise no censorship whatsoever

AOL can prevail here. But so could AT&T (now with free access), MCI, Microsoft, IBM, or a consortium of Web independent service providers. But they all have to **STOP DRINKING THE CORPORATE KOOL-AID** and do it right. Good luck.

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## PAPER CHASE

If you invested in the paper-products industry the day the term *paperless office* was coined, you're probably a multi-millionaire. The computer revolution has generated more paper than it's eliminated, but that may end someday soon if the cultural changes brought about by the Internet and the World Wide Web continue, as it seems they will. Meanwhile,

I believe the real societal change that enabled the revolution to continue was brought about by the archaic fax machine.

For over a decade, I've argued along with other computer scene observers that e-mail should be the premier mode of information exchange. Instead, it was the fax that became popular. Thanks to the Internet, e-mail has finally taken front-row center, but in the interim the fax machine has completely reversed the role of paper provider from the sender to the receiver—and it did so seamlessly. Nobody even noticed.

When you mail something you have to print it out, put it in an envelope for each recipient, pay the postage, and drop it off for pickup. When you fax, you put one master copy into the machine and recipients spend their own money on paper and ink. In fact, you don't even need to make an original; any fax program will turn a file into a virtual sheet of paper and send it over a fax modem. No supplies are used at all—except electricity. This galls me, especially when computer companies send me their information. They always want to fax it instead of mailing or e-mailing it. Why would I want to spend money on supplies to print junk mail? The nerve of their using *my* paper to print their publicity. It's like thievery.

However, while the Web grew as a publishing vehicle, it dawned on me that society had accepted the notion that the recipient, not the sender, pays for supplies. When you go to a favorite Web site, you don't complain about printing its pages at your cost, because fax technology has already trained you to accept this reality. In fact, it's no big deal. In some ways it's an environmental benefit.

Let's say the future of all publishing will be electronic, or at least dominated by electronic publishing—the same way many forms of entertainment are dominated by electronic distribution as opposed to live performances or even movies. The cost of electronic distribution would be fixed and very low (a Web site), instead of variable and expensive (paper and printing). When you need hard-copy information, you'll purchase the paper and print it onsite instantly. Let's face it: Your desktop computer, modem, and color printer are already a small print shop.

The benefit in this scenario is that most documents will be printed only as needed. As it now stands, printing is part of the distribution process, the presentation process, and the archival process. But in the future, it will be part of only presentation and archiving. Even so, printing will not be a full partner in either, since information will be both presented and archived electronically. Printing will be merely a minor option. For example, if *PC Computing* is distributed electronically in the year 2010, the likelihood that anyone would print out the whole magazine is nil.

One has to assume that at some point paper usage will decline. Many of us buried in the computer and communications revolution are mostly buried in paper. My hard-copy issues of *PC Week* are landfill after I

read them and tear out two articles of interest. Is all this necessary?

Years ago you could make an argument for maintaining hard-copy newspapers and magazines, because their online counterparts had weak graphics resolution and low information density. This is no longer a viable objection. The resolution of today's Web pages combined with JPEG graphics are as good as or better than any newspaper's. The Web's convenience and timeliness is rivaled only by broadcasting. And broadcasting is not random access and completely useless as a reference.

In the past I would have argued that one advantage of hard-copy newspapers and magazines is that they are browsable. You find things you didn't know you wanted to know. In fact, that's my argument against "personalized" newspapers, which

negate the discovery aspect by eliminating serendipitous news skimming. Now that argument is specious; online browsing is so much a part of the Web that the action of accessing information is called browsing. You use a Web browser to do it.

The odd discoveries you make on the Web far exceed anything imaginable in a daily newspaper. In fact, browsing can become a bad habit and a time waster: The Web approaches infinity when it comes to browsable content. Browse nonstop, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and you'll never come to the end as you do with a newspaper or a magazine. Maybe it's information overload.

But still. The good news is this: Despite the sheer volume of information that you access, you still won't use as much paper in a lifetime as you would with a one-year subscription to the *New York Times*.

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PC Magazine, November, 1995

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### COREL: An Award-Winning History

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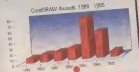
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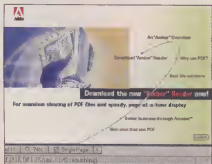
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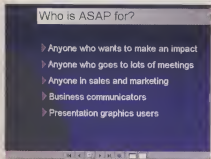
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Netscape's Navigator is a terrific Web browser, but it's designed primarily to view plain-vanilla HTML text pages. This puts serious limits on the kinds of material Web designers can publish and surfers can view. Fortunately, lots of companies are stepping in to ease those limitations with power tools called plug-ins.

Plug-ins are add-on programs that let you view flashy animations and graphics, fly through virtual 3-D worlds, create interactive presentations and spreadsheets, and tune in to audio broadcasts on the Web—all from within Navigator.

There are currently more than three dozen plug-ins that extend Navigator's power. We searched long and hard to find the best, using them all to comb through a long roster of virtual-reality sites, animated home pages, sophisticated graphics, and other cutting-edge Web innovations. In the end, we pulled together a list of the top six Navigator plug-ins that will kick your Web experience into high gear. All of these plug-ins are free; you can download them from the developers' home pages or link to them directly from *PC Computing's* Web site at [www.pccomputing.com](http://www.pccomputing.com).

To install a plug-in, simply download the program file and run the program's installation routine. All the plug-ins we tested work only with 32-bit versions of Navigator, so you have to run Windows 95 or Windows NT to enjoy them. If you're running a Windows 3.1 version of Navigator, there are also some 16-bit plug-ins available; check our Web site for more information.

**Macromedia Shockwave** Macromedia's Director is the multimedia authoring tool of choice for thousands of developers; it's what most CD-ROM titles are created with today. Macromedia's Shockwave plug-in for Navigator lets you view and interact with 2-D and 3-D Director animation files published on the Web. The number and variety of "shocked"

pages on the Web are impressive. Shockwave pages take much longer to load than standard HTML pages because you have to download the entire Shockwave animation file and store it locally before you can view it. It's worth the wait, though. The files include animation, streaming audio and video, and other special effects that make browsing more interesting. Shockwave makes the Web truly come alive.

If you have room on your hard drive for only one Navigator plug-in, Shockwave is the one to get. To see what it can do, visit Macromedia's Shockwave gallery ([www.macromedia.com](http://www.macromedia.com)).

**Adobe Acrobat Amber** Another popular Web trend is rich-document publishing, and the best Navigator extension for viewing pages pages of this type is Adobe's Acrobat Amber.

Adobe's Acrobat, an electronic-document publisher, has been popular for years. Acrobat lets you produce graphically rich documents in any word processor, desktop-publishing package, spreadsheet, or other productivity program, then converts the file to the portable document format (PDF) for viewing. Amber is Adobe's Web version of Acrobat, and it does much more than just display PDF documents. Amber documents can be fully interactive Web pages complete with hyperlinks. Because these documents are significantly larger than text-only HTML pages, they take longer to download. But they contain far richer graphics and are much more inviting to browse.

When you click on a link to a PDF file, Navigator's viewing window displays the



# Been Missing on the Web!

document with controls at the top and bottom of the window. These controls let you move through the document as you would using Acrobat. You can also click on a built-in link to get to a related page.

**ASAP WebShow** The Web is an excellent tool for finding content and customers, but until now it's been a limited means of delivering and viewing business presentations. Software Publishing's ASAP WebShow solves this problem. Use the program to publish your own presentations on the Web or to view those posted on others' Web sites. When you click on a link to an ASAP WebShow file on the Web, the program loads the new page and shows the first slide of the demonstration in a small window. You can flip through the presentation slide-by-slide, or sit back and watch it automatically cycle through the slides one at a time. The slide show also expands to fill Navigator's entire window, so it appears just as it would if delivered from a traditional presentation package.

**Formula One/Net** Animation, graphics, and interactive presentations are terrific for dressing up a Web site and getting your message out, but how about for presenting live numbers? Visual Components' Formula One/Net lets you view graphical spreadsheets over the Web that contain standard spreadsheet tables and charts, as well as buttons, controls, and hyperlinks.

Need mortgage amortizations? Just plug in the numbers. Simple financial modeling? Formula One/Net lets you run and view the numbers in your browser window. Formula One/Net is compatible with Microsoft's Excel, too, so you can import and export live Excel spreadsheets for easy, efficient viewing.

**Netscape Live3D** Paper Software's WebFX, a VRML player, was the first Navigator plug-in and remains one of the best. In fact, the folks at Netscape liked it so much that they decided to buy it. Now called Live3D, and supporting the VRML

2.0 technology of Moving Worlds, it lets you view and navigate through 3-D worlds on the Web. It takes a while to master Live3D, but once you get over the vertigo of flying through space, the effects are stunning.

A VRML standards war is brewing between the Netscape-backed Moving Worlds and the Microsoft-supported Direct 3D, which works with Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser. The upshot? Until standards are set, you can't view all 3-D VRML worlds on the Web with Live3D, only those created with the Moving Worlds technology. Even so, there are enough VRML sites created with Moving Worlds that this is an essential viewer for any Navigator arsenal.

## Progressive Networks RealAudio

Browsing the Web doesn't have to be just a visual experience. Another plug-in, RealAudio from Progressive Networks, lets you hear sound files over the Web as they're downloading. Called streaming audio, this technology sacrifices sound quality for convenience (think AM-radio with some static). But when it comes to speeches or live broadcasts such as baseball games, that's fine.

The RealAudio sound player has been available for quite some time as a separate application, but the plug-in takes the idea one step further by building controls—forward, rewind, pause, and volume—right into Navigator's interface. Once you download the plug-in, visit the RealAudio home page for a list of sites that serve up real-time sound.

**Plug In to the Web** The days of HTML-only Web browsing are fading fast. To fully experience the richness of the Web, you've got to have the right browser extensions. The six plug-ins reviewed here are the best available—and they're also free. But don't take our word for it. Check out these and other plug-ins for yourself by downloading them from *PC Computing's* Web site at [www.pccomputing.com](http://www.pccomputing.com).

NEIL RANDALL



**Get It All Online** You won't believe what you can do on the Web! Check out the latest 3-D animations and virtual worlds online, tune in to the best RealAudio pages, and create your own interactive Web presentations with the top six free extensions for Netscape's Navigator. You'll find these and other Internet power tools on *PC Computing's* Web site ([www.pccomputing.com](http://www.pccomputing.com)).

Loan Calculator	
Rates as of January 1st	
<b>Periodic Fixed Rate</b>	
1 Year	5.00%
2 Year	5.50%
3 Year	6.00%
4 Year	6.50%
5 Year	7.00%
10 Year	7.50%
15 Year	8.00%
20 Year	8.50%
30 Year	9.75%
Year Low APR Monthly Payment \$893.33	

**Calculate Your Payment**  
Enter your Amount To Finance

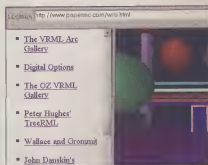
Amount To Finance:

Number of Years:

## Formula One/Net ★★★★★

**Verdict:** Brings the power of interactive spreadsheets to Navigator and the Web.

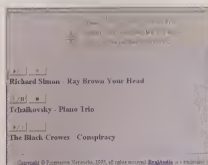
**Visual Components** / (800) 884-8865  
([www.visualcomp.com](http://www.visualcomp.com)) / free / Reader Service No. 674



## Live3D ★★★★★

**Verdict:** A fast and easy way to view and walk through virtual 3-D VRML worlds on the Web.

**Netscape Communications** / (415) 528-2555  
([home.netscape.com/comprod/products/navigator/live3d](http://home.netscape.com/comprod/products/navigator/live3d)) / free / Reader Service No. 675



## RealAudio ★★★★★

**Verdict:** The best way to tune in to live Web audio broadcasts—free.

**Progressive Networks** / (800) 230-5975  
([www.realaudio.com](http://www.realaudio.com)) / free / Reader Service No. 676

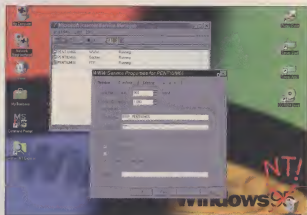
# Set Your Sites on the Web

Setting up your own Web site no longer requires a working knowledge of Unix and the patience of a saint. For \$800 or less, you can easily stake your business a claim in cyberspace with a new kind of Internet power tool: a Windows NT-based server program.

At least a dozen companies offer Web-server software, but which package is right for you? To find out, we looked at five contenders: Microsoft's Internet Information Server 1.0, Process Software's Purveyor 1.2, Frontier Technologies' SuperWeb Server, O'Reilly & Associates' WebSite 1.1, and Quarterdeck's WebStar 95/NT.

**Clever Disguise** Frontier's SuperWeb Server is a traditional package cleverly disguised as a general-purpose document-publishing system. Frontier redefines the Web-server paradigm using a complex folder metaphor to isolate users and site managers from the vagaries of a traditional Web-document tree. Unfortunately, SuperWeb Server does not support some basic functions such as assigning a custom document root to the system. Instead, you have to add all your files directly to the SuperWeb folder structure.

The usability pluses in SuperWeb Server include the HyperCheck utility, which points out dead-end hyperlinks to make it easier to debug complex sites. A simple, graphical HTML editor and an image-map utility make creating new documents a breeze. Overall, SuperWeb Server is a mixed bag: If you're a first-time Web developer starting from scratch, this product is more than adequate. However, if you've already developed a site and



**Free Web Server:** Microsoft's Internet Information Server 1.0 is a powerful, secure Web server that's tightly integrated with Windows NT. Best of all, it's free with Windows NT Server. If you run an NT shop, give it a spin.

## PICKS WEB-SERVER TOOLKITS

The best mix of basic and advanced features

O'Reilly & Associates  
WebSite 1.1

A complex, powerful, and extensible server

Process Software  
Purveyor 1.2

A server that's tightly integrated with Windows NT—and free

Microsoft Internet  
Information Server 1.0

you're hunting for an upgrade that will take you beyond the basics, look elsewhere.

### Great Web Giveaway

Microsoft just released its Internet Information Server (IIS) for Windows NT. It's a free NT Server add-on that will ship with all the future versions of Microsoft's flagship network operating system. One of the fastest Web servers on the market, IIS is tightly integrated with the native security features of Windows NT.

However, there are some major drawbacks. IIS doesn't come with any Web-authoring

utilities, and its user interface is less than complete. You'll often end up digging through the Registry to configure some of the sophisticated options.

**Instant Setup** O'Reilly & Associate's WebSite 1.1 is one of the established products on the NT platform. Providing dozens of basic and advanced server features, WebSite is geared toward first-time Web-server administrators and veterans alike. Installing WebSite is simple; you deal with just four disks and it takes only a couple of minutes. Once installed, O'Reilly's WebView

## FILEBOX

### Internet Information Server 1.0



**Verdict:** A powerful Web server that's priced to kill (free with Windows NT), but it lacks authoring utilities.

Free with Microsoft NT Server, which costs \$699  
Microsoft  
(800) 426-9400, (206) 882-8080  
Reader Service No. 677

### Purveyor 1.2



**Verdict:** Great choice for demanding Web applications and database integration.

\$495 est. street price  
Process Software  
(800) 722-7770  
Reader Service No. 678

### SuperWeb Server



**Verdict:** Pricier than the competition, but a solid server for setting up your first site.

\$795 est. street price  
Frontier Technologies  
(800) 929-3054, (414) 241-4555  
Reader Service No. 679

### WebSite 1.1



**Verdict:** The best overall choice for both first-time and experienced Web-server administrators.

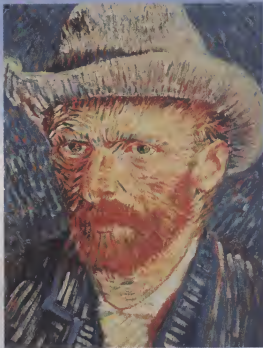
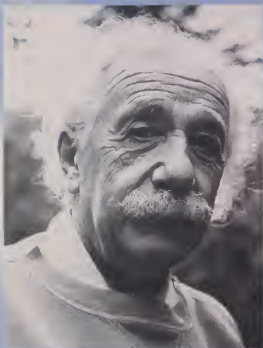
\$275 est. street price  
O'Reilly & Associates  
(800) 989-9838, (707) 829-0515  
Reader Service No. 680

### WebStar 95/NT



**Verdict:** Capable, no-frills Web server, without extensive authoring and automation utilities.

\$399 est. street price  
Quarterdeck Corp.  
(800) 663-6696, (310) 370-3700  
Reader Service No. 681



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Use our automated fax back system or speak with a Micrografx representative:  
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- Hands-free headset with microphone\*
- 1 year on-site warranty\*
- 1 year free phone support for hardware, 90 day free software support

\*In Canada, call 1-800-387-3887. \*Average U.S. street price for Pentium® processor-based HP Vectra 510 5/75 PC. Monitor not included. HP Vectra 500 PCs come with Microsoft Windows 95 preinstalled. †Standard on 133 and 166 MHz models, optional on all other models. ‡Other capacities available. \*Standard on CD, MC, and MDx models. ‡Media models only. †On-site, second day business service. Microsoft and Windows are U.S. registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. Pentium and the Intel Inside logo are U.S. registered trademarks of Intel Corporation. ©1996 Hewlett-Packard Company. PPS425

HP PCs For Small Business





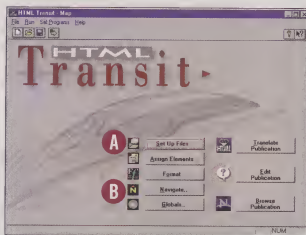
# One-Stop Web Press

You have to get your business up on the Web right away. But how do you make a Web site out of a mountain of documents originally intended for print? Don't waste your time rewriting and reorganizing everything using a stand-alone Web-page editor. Get an HTML translating program and convert your existing documents (graphics and all) into publishable HTML. What could be simpler? Two new converters, InfoAccess's HTML Transit and SkiSoft's Web Publisher Professional, promise to generate beautiful Web pages quickly and painlessly.

**Flexible Formats** HTML Transit is the smarter of the two programs. Its two-step translation first extracts the styles from the documents you want to convert, and then lets you specify how those styles will be handled. Or you can choose one of the default conversion templates—the program provides about a dozen, and they do a good job of creating respectable-looking Web pages from a variety of document types. HTML Transit's strengths include creating tables of contents and indexes, breaking large files into smaller sections, and inserting navigation buttons on each page.

If plain-vanilla Web pages don't appeal to you, jazz them up using HTML Transit's extensive gallery of backgrounds, icons, and buttons. You can control almost every aspect of page creation, including placement of the buttons and heading levels to include in the table of contents.

HTML Transit converts most word-processor formats, including Microsoft's Word, Corel's WordPerfect, and Lotus's Word Pro, and it even



**Paper Pages to Web Pages:** How do you publish documents that were originally intended for paper on your Web site? InfoAccess's HTML Transit and SkiSoft's Web Publisher convert existing material into publishable HTML files.



**Tricky Templates:** Web Publisher Professional excels at translating RTF and FrameMaker files to HTML, but customizing its conversion templates is a real chore.

handles Adobe's FrameMaker files. Fast and straightforward, it lets you control as much or as little of the conversion process as you want.

**Rich Documents** If your documents contain a lot of tables, Web Publisher Professional is the converter for you. It excels at rendering HTML 3.0 tables, even tables within tables (also called nested tables). In other respects, however, it's not as powerful or as easy to use as HTML Transit.

Web Publisher works best with Rich Text Format (RTF) files. Most word processors can export documents to RTF, but it's an annoying extra step that

complicates republishing projects. While Web Publisher generates attractive HTML files using its standard template, only two additional templates are supplied, and creating custom templates is a difficult process that requires some familiarity with HTML coding.

Although both of these products could be easier to use, customizing file conversions with HTML Transit is simpler than with Web Publisher. HTML Transit also has a rich gallery of graphic enhancements, so it's the better tool for most purposes. Whichever you choose, it's better than starting from scratch. **DYLAN TWENEY**

## FILEBOX

### HTML Transit



**Verdict:** Powerful, customizable document conversion for HTML publishing.

**Pros:** Automatically breaks large files into manageable pages; included templates are relatively easy to tailor.

**Cons:** Doesn't convert tables as elegantly as Web Publisher.

**Competition:** Web Publisher is harder to use but does a better job converting tables. Microsoft's Word Internet Assistant is free but not as powerful.

**System Requirements:** Windows 3.1 or Windows 95, 386 CPU, 4MB of RAM, 5MB of hard disk space.

\$495 list price  
InfoAccess  
(800) 344-9737, (206) 747-3203  
Reader Service No. 682

### Web Publisher Professional



**Verdict:** Sophisticated HTML conversion that's difficult to customize.

**Pros:** Strong table-conversion feature; built-in support for information mapping.

**Cons:** Tailoring the few templates and buttons the program includes is difficult.

**Competition:** HTML Transit is easier to use and offers a gallery of bullets, icons, and backgrounds, but it doesn't handle tables as gracefully as Web Publisher does.

**System Requirements:** Windows 3.1, Windows 95, or Windows NT; 386 CPU; 8MB of RAM; 5MB of hard disk space.

\$990 list price; \$495 list price without the Long Document Utility  
SkiSoft Publishing Corp.  
(800) 662-3822, (617) 863-1878  
Reader Service No. 683





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The U.S. Robotics Sportster is the fastest, most reliable modem you can buy. For compatibility, connectivity and cumulative throughput, the Sportster proved to excel well beyond its nearest competitors in two separate and equally uncompromising independent lab tests. And during this incredible comparative exhibition, it not only outperformed other 28.8 Kbps modems, it outperformed the ratified standard for speed by working beautifully in a 33.6 Kbps mode.

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with a kit containing everything you need to get on the Internet immediately. This kit includes a user-friendly 150-page World Wide Web guide book written just for the Sportster, software for optimum Web navigation, and free registration with NetCom, GNN® and CompuServe® Internet Division.

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Internet Power Tools

# Free Phone Calls on the Net

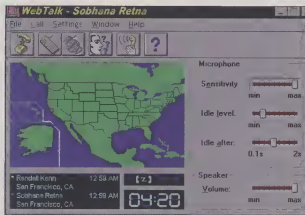
Want to make calls across the country or around the world without spending a dime on long-distance charges? If you have an Internet connection and a sound card, just add Internet-phone software to talk for free over the Net. Some caveats: You still have to pay for your Internet connection; sound quality and reliability can be spotty; and—at least for now—you can talk only to people who are using the same Internet-phone software.

Even so, Internet phones are quickly moving from the hobby den to the small office. We examined the top three Internet voice-communication products: Third Planet Publishing's DigiPhone, VocalTec's Internet Phone 3.0, and Quarterdeck's WebTalk.

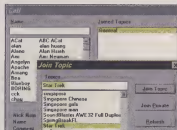
**Digital Dial Tone** Quarterdeck's WebTalk is a breeze to use and works well with most sound cards. It comes with lots of useful extras, including a complimentary second license for a friend, a bundled copy of Quarterdeck's Mosaic Web browser, and Labtec's first-rate microphone.

To place a call, simply punch in the Internet address of the person you're trying to reach, and WebTalk takes care of the rest. WebTalk's interface features slider controls for volume and microphone sensitivity. It also has well-designed configuration dialog boxes and a text chat feature that lets you send ASCII data over your WebTalk connection. In fact, the only thing missing is an encryption option, which is where DigiPhone comes in.

**Private Line** Third Planet Publishing's DigiPhone is a more limited Internet phone, but it's ideal for users who need to connect to the same



**Phone Tag:** New Internet phones such as Quarterdeck's WebTalk (above), Third Planet's DigiPhone, and VocalTec's Internet Phone let you add voice communications to your Net connection and enjoy long-distance calls for next to nothing.



**Can We Talk?** VocalTec's Internet Phone 3.0 connects to other phone servers, where you'll find channels on specific topics.

group of individuals repeatedly. DigiPhone is also the only one that includes a voice-encryption option to safeguard the privacy of your calls.

Operating DigiPhone is straightforward. To make a call, enter the Internet address of the user you wish to contact, and click on the Call button. DigiPhone then initiates the call. Third Planet publishes a directory of registered DigiPhone customers, and you can store an unlimited number of user addresses in the address book.

Although DigiPhone's interface is adequate, it could be better. A few more dropdown lists for placing phone calls (instead of blank input

fields), and a slider control for volume would make the product much more usable.

**The First Voice** VocalTec's Internet Phone was one of the first Internet voice-communication products on the market, and it's beginning to show its age. Aimed primarily at hobbyists and Net enthusiasts, Internet Phone uses a server-based communications model reminiscent of Internet relay chat, another ad hoc communications medium.

To place calls with Internet Phone you first install the software and then connect to one of VocalTec's servers, which are located in a variety of major metropolitan areas around the globe. These servers maintain a

## FILEBOX

### DigiPhone



**Verdict:** A simple, secure Web phone, but it can't top Quarterdeck's WebTalk.

\$49 est. street price  
Third Planet Publishing  
(214) 733-4790  
Reader Service No. 684

### Internet Phone 3.0



**Verdict:** The most limited—and expensive—of the three, but it includes a global directory of users.

\$60 est. street price  
VocalTec  
(800) 843-2289, (201) 768-9400  
Reader Service No. 685

### WebTalk



**Verdict:** The easiest Web phone available—and the microphone's included.

\$40 est. street price  
Quarterdeck  
(800) 683-6696, (310) 309-3700  
Reader Service No. 686

database of other registered Internet Phone users. You can search for callers by name or by special-interest topics that range from cooking to sports. Unfortunately, because Internet Phone is dependent on servers, you can't use it to place calls over a LAN or WAN.

If you're interested in a server-based Internet phone that comes with a directory of people you can call, VocalTec's Internet Phone is a fine solution for you. If privacy is your greatest concern, turn to Third Planet Publishing's DigiPhone, the only Internet phone that offers encryption. But the best all-around value is by far Quarterdeck's WebTalk. **RANDALL C. KENNEDY**



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\* Estimated street/wholesale price of the 2 MB version. Based on 12.5 MB available in retail packaging only. Windows 3.1 demo conducted by Matrox Graphics Inc. using 386/33. Windows 95 or Windows NT, 3.5 MB system with 256 color. 16MB/256MB at 1024 x 768 or 256 color. 32 bit 1600 x 1200 resolution. The Matrox MGA Millennium and Standard Series 4 MB video were configured with 2 MB of memory, and the Matrox Media Series 128 was configured with 4 MB of memory. For the PCI bus using drive releases 2.20, 4.1 and 1.04 single-bus only.

1-800-583-4353 <http://www.matrox.com/mga/>

New!

# Find It Fast on the Web

Computer games used to be the big PC productivity busters, but they can't hold a candle to the inexhaustibly intriguing Internet. When you log on to search for a simple bit of information, you often find yourself sidetracked, wandering off in myriad directions. That's why a top-notch Web-search engine is one of the most important Internet power tools you can have.

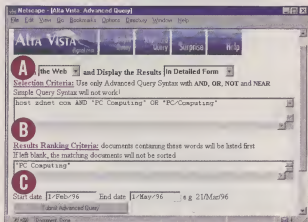
We examined three of the best free search services: Alta Vista, Infoseek Guide, and Yahoo—link to all of them from *PC Computing's* Web site ([www.pccomputing.com](http://www.pccomputing.com)). We also looked at Infoseek Professional, which costs \$4.95 a month, to see how the free search sites stack up against this pay-as-you-go option.

**View from the Top** Digital Equipment's free Alta Vista is the most advanced search site of this bunch. While other search engines claim to have larger Web-page databases or more refined search tools, they simply can't match Alta Vista's volume of information.

In our tests, Alta Vista's query results were both more thorough and more accurate. In other words, it returns the longest list of hits that match your search criteria. Plus, Alta Vista provides site summaries so you don't waste time chasing down blind alleys.

**Launch Pad** Yahoo capitalizes on an Internet convention called the link list to build a giant navigable index of links, organized by topic, to Web sites. Yahoo includes Web Launch, a list of new Web sites. In addition to using the basic index, you can grab news headlines and Picks of the Week.

Yahoo (which has a strategic partnership with Ziff-



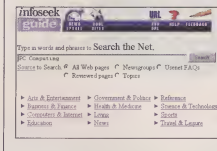
## The Best in Web Searching:

Looking for an easy way to sift through the chaos known as the World Wide Web? Free search sites like Alta Vista, Infoseek Guide, and Yahoo can help. If you bookmark just one search site, make it Digital Equipment's Alta Vista (above).

**A.** Alta Vista includes several search-narrowing modifiers.

**B.** The Results Ranking Criteria field displays hits in a preferred order.

**C.** Limit the document dates you want to search.



## Net Guide:

If it's out there, you'll find it with Infoseek Guide's search tools and topic index.

Davis/SoftBank, the parent publishing company of *PC Computing*) is reorganizing some of its main topic areas. As it stands, it's easy to become bewildered as you tunnel many levels deep into certain search categories. The addition of OpenText search technology is a major improvement, too.

**Look It Up** Infoseek has two unique and useful search services: Infoseek Guide and Infoseek Professional. Infoseek Guide is the company's free Web-page search tool. Its strengths are twofold: It has an amazingly accurate search

engine as well as an up-to-date directory. Currency, however, is also its Achilles heel, because it doesn't often pick up items more than a few months old.

Infoseek Professional is a membership-based search tool. For about \$5 a month (fees vary), you get the same Web, Usenet, FTP, and gopher resources you get with Infoseek Guide. But with Infoseek Professional you can search and retrieve documents from 16 additional databases. Some of these databases require extra fees, but the sheer amount of data is staggering. If research is

## FILEBOX

### Alta Vista



**Verdict:** Very accurate, fast, comprehensive, and free.

Site: [www.altavista.digital.com](http://www.altavista.digital.com)  
Digital Equipment Corp.  
Reader Service No. 687

### Infoseek Guide



**Verdict:** Powerful free search site that keeps improving.

Site: [www.infoseek.com/home](http://www.infoseek.com/home)  
Infoseek Corp.  
Reader Service No. 688

### Infoseek Professional



**Verdict:** An inexpensive search tool for serious researchers.

\$4.95 per month, fees vary  
Site: [www.infoseek.com](http://www.infoseek.com)  
Infoseek Corp.  
Reader Service No. 689

### Yahoo



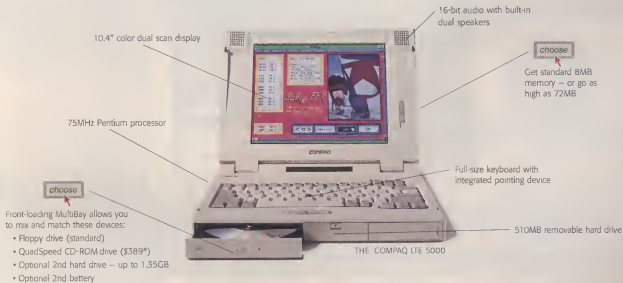
**Verdict:** A popular, fun, and free Web-search service.

Site: [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)  
Yahoo  
Reader Service No. 690

a regular part of your job, Infoseek Professional is worth the money.

Overall, Alta Vista is the best choice. Its only shortcoming is that it can't serve a large number of users simultaneously. Infoseek Guide is an acceptable fallback. When you don't know the address of the site you're looking for, or you want to learn about a specific subject on the Web, Yahoo is the best tool for the job. (Besides, Yahoo is just plain fun.) And if you need access to loads of data, Infoseek Professional is well worth the cover charge. **SCOT FINNIE**

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New!

Internet Power Tools

Internet Power Tools

# Web Publishing Comes Alive

## SNEAK PREVIEW

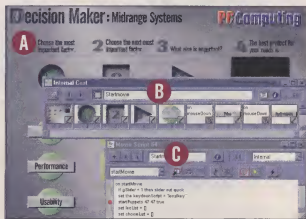
CD-ROM isn't the only medium for delivering live multimedia these days. High-speed Internet connections are making the Web an increasingly attractive means of delivering live, interactive content. Macromedia's Director opens a new world for anyone interested in online multimedia publishing. The latest version of the program, Director 5, is difficult to use, but it's the most powerful multimedia authoring tool you'll find—whether you're publishing on CD or the Internet.

### Shocking Development

Macromedia's Shockwave, a program for creating animations on the Web, caused quite a stir when it was released a few months ago. With Director 5, developers can effortlessly convert existing Director files into Shockwave files and embed them into their Web pages. The Shockwave development kit and viewer are available for free from the Macromedia Web site ([www.macromedia.com](http://www.macromedia.com)).

The downside is that most Shockwave files are huge. Even though they're compressed to half the size of the original Director file, it's difficult to produce something smaller than 200K—and impossible if you include much sound or any digital video.

Another big development is Director's new plug-in environment. The included software-development kit, called Lingo Xtras, lets you add a variety of new elements to any completed application created in Director 5. The coolest new feature lets you plug in Cast members, or multimedia elements. In other words, if you want to create a multimedia magazine, for example, you can



### Many Faces of Multimedia:

Macromedia's Director 5 opens new worlds for multimedia and Internet publishing. The new plug-in architecture lets you add elements and updates to your multimedia applications or publish them on the Web.



A. Test and view your creations on the Stage.

B. Each Cast member is fully editable.

C. The new debugger lets you instantly pinpoint bad code.

**Lights, Camera, Internet:** The free Shockwave for Director developer's kit lets you turn any Director file into a Shockwave file and embed it into your HTML Web pages.

supply users with the main interface and framework, and then add monthly updates in the form of Cast members.

**Curtain Call** Cast member files are smaller than entire Director movies. That alone can save publishers millions of dollars in CD-ROM production. Rather than burning and distributing a new CD-ROM every time a product is updated, publishers can provide users with downloadable updates. This mimics the philosophy behind Sun Microsystems's Java, where users download only the parts of a program they plan to use.

Already thinking of 20 interesting applications to create? Not so fast. Director is still a bear to use. Its programming language, Lingo, isn't modeled after any standard programming language. Therefore, developers crossing over from Microsoft's Visual Basic or any other authoring tool will have to spend time learning Lingo's nuances. And, unlike other authoring tools that automate common functions, Director requires scripting for almost every action. While the language hasn't changed from previous versions, new debugging tools cut

down on production time by pinpointing bad code and setting break points to help isolate bad scripting.

For creating basic interactive presentations or applications, you're better off with a simpler—and less expensive—solution. Ulead Systems' MediaStudio Pro and Scala's MM100 are easier to use for lighter development needs. But for heavy-duty multimedia development, either for CD-ROM or the Internet, Director is the way to go. While it's not the simplest route, it's one of the most powerful packages around.

JACK LYON

## FILEBOX

### Director 5



**Verdict:** The premier multimedia authoring tool for Web and CD development.

**Pros:** Easy Internet conversion tools, and a plug-in architecture that supports Cast members and OLE.

**Cons:** Scripting is required for many simple actions, and the learning curve is steep.

**Competition:** Asymetrix's Multimedia Toolbox, Motion Works' MediaShop, and Microsoft's Visual Basic don't match Director's powerful multimedia features or simple Internet integration.

### System Requirements:

Windows 3.1 or Windows 95, 486 CPU, 8MB of RAM.

**Online Extras:** Download the Shockwave plug-in for Netscape and see examples of what Director 5 can do, at PC Computing Online ([www.pccomputing.com](http://www.pccomputing.com)).

\$850 est. street price  
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New!

Internet Power Tools

Internet Power Tools

# Out-of-Site Web Browsing

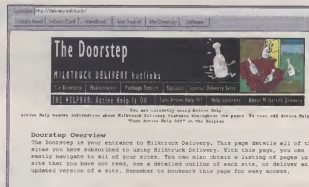
SNEAK  
PREVIEW

Surfing the Internet with a slow modem is like driving a 1973 Ford Pinto—you'll eventually get where you're going, but it might be a long, shaky trip. If you don't have the cash to upgrade to a Cadillac, don't fret. Two new programs, Milktruck Delivery and ForeFront's WebWhacker, let you park your modem while they do the driving.

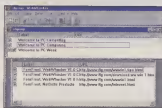
Both utilities grab Web sites off the Internet and stash them on your hard drive, from where you can view them offline at any time. Although you explore the sites locally with a browser, all the graphics and links appear just as they would online. Even sound files and Java applets are imported intact. If you have a speedy connection at work but a slow one at home, download sites at your office and browse them at home. Or transfer them to your notebook and read them on the road. Both Milktruck Delivery and WebWhacker are available for purchase from their Web sites, both are compatible with most major browsers, and both will save you time and money. However, each has its own advantages and disadvantages.

**Direct Download** WebWhacker works like a screen-capture utility with a few twists. Enter a URL and the program finds the site, and copies it to a designated folder. Get one Web site at a time, or download several with one whack. Save a large site and all of its links, or grab only certain pages of a site. Whatever you choose, the files are saved on your system for future browsing.

Milktruck Delivery takes a slightly different approach. In



**Offline Browsing:** Hate waiting for Web pages to load? Milktruck Delivery (above) and WebWhacker grab sites off the Web and stash them on your hard drive, where you can view them with a browser. Graphics and links appear just as they do online.



**Grabbing Groups:** WebWhacker lets you create as many folders as you need to store offline images of similar sites in one place.

addition to standard Web sites, it also lets you visit several popular subscription sites, such as ESPN's SportsZone, CNN Interactive, or the Spot, using a "subscription" form. Milktruck Delivery launches your browser and delivers subscription sites to a central page called Doorstep.

Move through each delivered site with your browser, or search an index that outlines all the captured links within each site and marks the ones that are new or unread. The Package Design feature works more like WebWhacker: Enter any URL for delivery. As with WebWhacker, you can set size limits on sites, depending on your needs and available hard drive space.

Even on a T1 line, small sites take about a minute to retrieve, while large sites take at least ten

minutes. Milktruck Delivery promises a feature for advance scheduling in its final version, but it wasn't available in our preview copy.

**Discount Delivery** Even without the scheduling feature, however, Milktruck Delivery offers more options for a better price. Milktruck Delivery will increase its roster of subscription sites in the future, and although you have to request updates every day, it delivers only the information that changes. While some people might prefer WebWhacker's no-nonsense style, we liked Milktruck's integrated Web design and charming delivery motif. WebWhacker is certainly adequate, but you're better off buying Milktruck and applying the extra \$20 to your fast-modem savings fund.

JULIE MCCULLOUGH

## FILEBOX

### Milktruck Delivery



**Verdict:** An imaginative, effective way to bring your Web browsing up to speed and offline.

**Pros:** Brings any Web site right to your hard drive.

**Cons:** Requires a Winsock connection; America Online and Prodigy users are locked out.

**System Requirements:** 386 CPU, 1MB of RAM, 10MB of hard disk space, CompuServe or Internet connection.

**Online Extras:** Purchase Milktruck from [www.milktruck.com](http://www.milktruck.com). You'll also find a live link to the site at PC Computing Online ([www.pccomputing.com](http://www.pccomputing.com)).

\$30 est. street price  
Milktruck, LLC  
(408) 245-7238  
Reader Service No. 692

### WebWhacker



**Verdict:** A capable but expensive offline browser; the competition does the same for less.

**Pros:** Simply and thoroughly downloads Web sites to your hard drive.

**Cons:** The interface lacks the friendly look and feel of a Web browser; doesn't support subscription sites.

**System Requirements:** 386 CPU, 4MB of RAM, 10MB of hard disk space, Internet access.

**Online Extras:** Purchase a copy of WebWhacker from ForeFront's Web site ([www.ffg.com](http://www.ffg.com)). You'll also find a live link to ForeFront's site at PC Computing Online ([www.pccomputing.com](http://www.pccomputing.com)).

\$50 est. street price  
ForeFront Group  
(800) 867-1101, (713) 961-1101  
Reader Service No. 693

Guide to the Ratings:

★★★★★ Excellent

★★★★ Good

★★★ Acceptable

★★ Poor

★ Unacceptable



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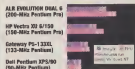
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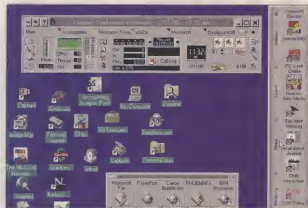


# Cruise Control on the I-Way

## SNEAK PREVIEW

How many different ways do you merge onto the Internet? If you have a T1 connection at work, a direct dial-up link at home, and a CompuServe or America Online account, you could be juggling a confusing array of bookmarks, hotlists, and favorites—none of which relate to one another. Starfish's Internet Dashboard gives you one intuitive set of controls for cruising the Internet. It's not a browser, but rather a 32-bit Windows 95 utility that bridges the gaps between different browsers and neighborhoods on the I-Way.

Internet Dashboard lets you turn your World Wide Web URLs, FTP addresses, and online-service forums into Windows 95 shortcuts that



**Custom Flight Panel:** Internet Dashboard organizes your Internet and online information from one menu.

you drag onto Dashboard's diminutive panels. Instead of negotiating different addresses in different browsers, you click on a Quick Launch button and let Internet Dashboard open the right browser.

Even if you have only one Internet on-ramp, Internet Dashboard makes your trip much smoother. It accurately tracks your connect time by session, day, month, and year, and lets you know the minute

your free access time runs out for services.

If you want to streamline your Internet connections and decrease your online costs, check out Starfish's Internet Dashboard. **MIKE HOGAN**

## FILEBOX

### Internet Dashboard



**Verdict:** An intelligent way to cruise through cyberspace.

**Pros:** A single interface for all your online and Internet connections.

**Cons:** Another interface to learn and master.

**System Requirements:** Windows 95, 486 CPU.

\$50 est. street price  
Starfish Software  
(800) 765-7839, (408) 461-5800  
Reader Service No. 696

## DigitalStyle WebSuite

# Instant Web-Page Makeover

## SNEAK PREVIEW

Do your Web pages look boring? Do visitors to your site have to wade through page after page of plain text? Dress up those tired gray sites with the help of some expensive eye candy, courtesy of DigitalStyle's WebSuite.

WebSuite's purpose is simple: It collects and organizes decorative images so you can include them in your Web pages. Its style groups contain professional-looking bullets, separator bars, navigational buttons, backgrounds, and title bars. Select the item you want, and WebSuite either copies it to the Clipboard or saves the graphic in a folder and places



**All Dressed Up:** WebSuite provides the tools you need to add stylish graphics to your sites.

an HTML tag on the Clipboard to reference it.

Want a classy-looking title? Select one of the blank title bars and enter your text. Add shadowing, colors, and special effects, and the title is ready to go. WebSuite even estimates

the size of the resulting image file.

WebSuite's biggest shortcoming is its lack of style choices. Only 4 to 6 style groups are included with the Standard Edition, and 25 with the Designer Edition—not enough to justify the program's high price.

If you want to add lively, coordinated graphics to your Web site, WebSuite is worth a look. But with a price tag of \$199, it's not a very cost-effective solution. Most Web designers are better off with a good image editor and a cool collection of clip art. **DYLAN TWENEY**

## FILEBOX

### WebSuite



**Verdict:** An easy way to add color-coordinated flair to your existing Web pages—but style choices are limited.

**Pros:** Makes it easy to incorporate attractive, coordinated design elements throughout your Web site.

**Cons:** The image-editing tools are extremely limited; the price is prohibitive.

**System Requirements:** Windows 95, 486 CPU.

\$199 est. street price for Standard Edition;  
\$529 for Designer Edition  
DigitalStyle Corp.  
(800) 388-7895, (619) 673-5057  
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The software learns your typing habits. It lets you concentrate on the words, not on how to spell them.

Spell-checking now happens on the fly, as you type. Misspelled words are underlined so you can correct them as you go. Click on the right mouse button and alternative spellings appear. Common mistakes everyone makes when typing are corrected by the software automatically. (*Thier* is changed to *Their* every time you type it.) Microsoft Word learns to recognize both the idiosyncratic mistakes you have a tendency to make, and the peculiar names, abbreviations, and spellings you don't want it to correct. If you override a correction, it adds the word or phrase to its exceptions list and never makes that change again. It has even learned to speak your language. If you have a question, you ask the Answer Wizard in plain English. "How do I make this into two columns?" It gives you step-by-step instructions. You stop working only long enough to type in your question.

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With WordMail's connection to the Microsoft Exchange Inbox in Windows® 95, you can write e-mail messages using the many formatting options of Microsoft Word to communicate more clearly, more convincingly.

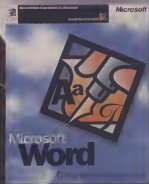
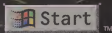
Use the Highlighter to emphasize key information. Make your case in ways you

never could with traditional e-mail editors. You can share documents with

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Word's many revision tools. And you can use the Internet Assistant\* for Word

to browse the World Wide Web and author your own documents on the



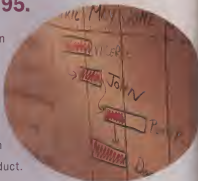
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# to guide your project down a clear path

## Microsoft Project for Windows 95.

Now you can manage projects more simply, more smoothly, by communicating project information as it occurs. With Microsoft® Project you can convey project status quickly and effectively so your boss, customers, and coworkers are always in the loop. From sharing task deadlines and responsibilities, to letting people know about changes and the impact they'll have on the deadline, you have the tools to organize your projects into manageable steps and keep them moving in the right direction. Microsoft Project unlocks the doors of communication and gives you the power to navigate the most efficient route to a successful end product.



### Graphical views let teammates visualize where the project is going.

With Microsoft Project you can display project data in ways that everyone can understand. Great-looking Gantt Charts integrate text, timelines and graphical bars so everyone can see start and finish dates, interdependencies and task assignments. Throughout your project, you can also use a Monthly Calendar report to share your plan in a format that's clear and easy to read. And since Microsoft Project shares many of the same key commands with other Office applications, it will be easy to create schedules and reports. But if at any time you need help, type in a question and the Answer Wizard gives you the information you need. Microsoft Project helps you illustrate every phase of your project so you and your team keep your goals in sight.



# Microsoft®

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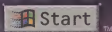


To see an autodemo and more, go to <http://www.microsoft.com/msoffice>. Or call 800-426-9400.

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## Keep everyone moving on the same track with open lines of communication.

Microsoft Project is completely integrated with a wide range of e-mail systems\* and Schedule+ so that with a single click, changes and additions are immediately distributed to and from teammates. Assignments, task changes, and progress can be communicated and updated without ever reentering information, so you save time and eliminate mistakes. And because Microsoft Project is a member of the Office family, sharing data between programs is easy. For example, you can start building a schedule by simply dragging a task list out of Microsoft Excel and dropping it directly into your Microsoft Project plan. You keep communication clear and information consistent and your project continues to move exactly the way you planned.



### Now you can take full advantage of Windows 95.

Microsoft Project is the world's best selling project management software and now is optimized to work hand-in-hand with the 32-bit performance, advanced multitasking, and simplified user interface of the Windows® 95 operating system. Together, they help open the lines of communication. Together, they help you enhance the way you manage your projects.

# COREL DRAW! 6

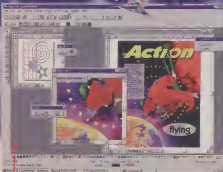
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## Compaq Presario 9240

# Presario Bids Goodbye to Paper

### SNEAK PREVIEW

Silly you. Thought Compaq's Presario had everything, didn't you? Pentium power, multimedia sound, video, a fast fax modem, and built-in telephony—what's missing? How about document management?

The Presario 9240 comes dressed to the gunwales with the features you'd expect in any under-\$4,000 SOHO machine. But it also has a phase-dual CD-ROM drive (PD-CD). Couple this with Compaq's new scanner keyboard (a \$329 option), and you can bid goodbye to paper receipts, invoices, business cards, reports, and other office flotsam. Simply scan the documents into your system, then store them on rewritable CDs—up to 650MB per disc.

The drive uses Panasonic's quad-speed Phase Change Dual technology. Unlike magneto-optical drives, which use a bias magnet to store data, PD-CD drives actually alter the surface of the disc with a laser.

The drive reads normal CDs and supports Kodak Photo CD, CD-recordable, and multisession standards, delivering transfer rates of up to 600Kbps. The drive's rewritable discs cost about \$60.

**Paper Tamer** The scanner keyboard, licensed from Visioneer Communications, includes PaperPort's scanning software, which lets you highlight documents, make annotations, and perform keyword searches. Print, fax, or link your documents to any of 50 word processors, spreadsheets, and graphics packages. The



**Kitchen Sink:** Compaq's Presario 9240 includes everything you'd expect from a 133MHz Pentium SOHO box—as well as a scanner-equipped keyboard and PD-CD drive that stores data on rewritable CDs.

**No Typing:** The unobtrusive grayscale scanner embedded in the keyboard lets you scan anything from business cards to receipts into your PC.



bundle also includes Xerox's TextBridge OCR program.

The grayscale scanner supports resolutions of up to 400 dpi and has seven settings for everything from business cards to snapshots and articles.

Compaq's system gets high marks for all-around usability, too. Scanner performance is quick and painless on the Presario 9240. Kudos to its paper-handling mechanism, which manages a wide variety of textures. And because the scanner is embedded at the top of the keyboard, it takes up

less space than Visioneer's \$369 PaperPort Vx.

**Powerful Parts** The machine's minitower is quick and unobtrusive. Compaq added SpeechMail—voice-recognition software that lets you operate the built-in answering machine by barking simple instructions. It's unsophisticated but competent. Spatializer, the 3-D audio technology licensed from Audio Labs, is a vast improvement over Compaq's previous audio circuitry.

High-end multimedia will cost you, however. The system

## FILEBOX

### Presario 9240



**Verdict:** Everything a SOHO business could ask for in a system, and then some.

**Pros:** Stocked to the nines—with a PD-CD drive to boot.

**Cons:** Mediocre multimedia and video; you'll want to upgrade the standard 1MB of VRAM to 2MB.

**Competition:** Other SOHO systems, such as IBM's Aptiva and Acer's Aspire, offer competitive all-in-one systems but lack the optional scanner keyboard and PD-CD drive.

**Features as Tested:** 133MHz Pentium, 256K L2 cache, 16MB of RAM, 1.2GB hard drive, quad-speed PD-CD drive, 28.8Kbps fax modem with telephony, 16-bit audio, dual speakers, grayscale scanner integrated on keyboard, three ISA slots, one PCI/ISA slot, one PCI slot.

\$3,647 est. street price  
Compaq Computer Corp.  
(800) 652-6672, (713) 370-0670  
Reader Service No. 697

comes with 1MB of video RAM, but hardware MPEG support and wavetable synthesis are options you have to purchase separately. And the monitor isn't included in the price.

Still, the \$2,799 Presario 9240 is quite a bundle. It comes with 16MB of RAM, 256K L2 cache, a 1.2GB hard drive, and a 28.8Kbps fax modem. Add the scanner keyboard and a 15-inch monitor, and the price surges to \$3,647. But for home and small offices, this price fetches a near-perfect complement of power and features. **MARTY JEROME**

Guide to the Ratings: ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★★ Good ★★★★★ Acceptable ★★★★★ Poor ★★★★★ Unacceptable

## Penny-pinching Pentiums

It's hard to argue against the convenience of buying direct: With one phone call, you can have a custom-built dream system delivered to your doorstep. Three companies vying for your mail-order business are CompuLink Research, Midwest Micro, and Quantex MicroSystems. All of them offer budget-priced 133MHz Pentiums with all the essentials.

For less than \$2,800, you can get a system that includes 16MB of RAM, at least a 1.2GB hard drive, and a 17-inch monitor. Midwest Micro's P5-133 Office PC includes an impressive software bundle of Microsoft's Office Professional, Bookshelf, and Encarta. Quantex's QP5/133 SM-1 includes Intuit's Quicken, Grolier's Encyclopedia, GoldDisk's Astound, Cognitech's SharkWare, and Novell's PerfectOffice business application suite. Surprisingly, CompuLink's Infinity P5-133EDO doesn't come with software, but it's the only machine we reviewed with an internal 28.8Kbps fax modem.

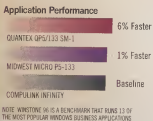
### Quality Components

Once you get past the software, you'll find quality components in Quantex's QP5/133. It includes Western Digital's 1.6GB Caviar hard drive, a six-speed CD-ROM drive, and STB Systems' snappy PowerGraph 64 graphics card. While its sound card, Ensoniq's Soundscape, wouldn't be our first choice, the combination of components give the QP5/133 the best overall Windows speed, the best graphics performance, and solid hard-disk performance. The QP5/133 also offers the cleanest internal layout and design: Its three PCI slots and four ISA slots provide lots of room for expansion.



**Direct Deals:** CompuLink's Infinity (left), Quantex's QP5/133 SM-1 (center), and Midwest Micro's P5-133 (right) are all solid 133MHz Pentium systems at bargain prices. Quantex's system offers the best overall performance, while Midwest Micro's Pentium features the best 17-inch monitor.

### 133MHz Desktop Bargains



Midwest Micro's P5-133 also turned out impressive numbers, yielding the fastest hard-disk performance of the bunch. The P5-133 trailed the QP5/133 only slightly in our Windows 95 applications performance tests. Credit that to Quantum's 1.2GB Fireball hard drive and Number Nine's 9FX Motion 771 graphics card—both premium components. In addition, the P5-133's 17-inch monitor was our favorite, displaying crisp images and offering easy-to-use controls. The system also includes a basic Aztech six-speed CD-ROM drive, but no sound card.

**Price Buster** Like Quantex's QP5/133, CompuLink's Infinity P5-133EDO includes Western Digital's enormous

### Close Call:

Performance won't disappoint on any of these 133MHz Pentiums, but Quantex's QP5/133 SM-1 offers a slight edge in Windows applications.

1.6GB Caviar hard drive, which delivers solid hard-disk performance. The system features a six-speed CD-ROM drive and a custom, combination graphics and sound card with an S3 868 Vision-based graphics accelerator and Creative Labs' Vibra 16 sound circuitry. The Infinity has the best case design and the lowest price of the bunch.

All three of these 133MHz Pentium systems offer respectable performance. Combine that with their attractive prices, and they'll make it onto your shortlist. And because you order these machines directly from the manufacturers, you can mix and match components to get the best system for your needs. **ADAM MEYERSON**

## FILEBOX

### Infinity P5-133EDO



**Verdict:** Fast Pentium performance at a great price—software not included.

#### Features as Tested:

133MHz Pentium, 256K cache, 16MB of RAM, Western Digital's 1.6GB Caviar EIDE hard drive, six-speed CD-ROM drive, S3 Vision 868 graphics and Creative Labs' Vibra 16 sound on a custom card, 28.8Kbps fax modem.

\$2,589 list price  
CompuLink Research  
(800) 611-1555, (305) 450-7061  
Reader Service No. 700

### P5-133 Office PC



**Verdict:** A fast Pentium loaded with quality software, but needs a sound card and component upgrades.

#### Features as Tested:

133MHz Pentium, 256K cache, 16MB of RAM, Quantum's 1.2GB Fireball EIDE hard drive, six-speed CD-ROM drive, Number Nine's 9FX Motion 771 graphics card.

\$2,750 list price  
Midwest Micro  
(800) 883-1463, (513) 368-2309  
Reader Service No. 701

### QP5/133 SM-1



**Verdict:** A fast Pentium with a multitude of hardware and software extras.

#### Features as Tested:

133MHz Pentium, 256K cache, 16MB of RAM, Western Digital's 1.6GB Caviar EIDE hard drive, six-speed CD-ROM drive, STB's PCI PowerGraph 64 graphics card, Ensoniq's Soundscape 16-bit sound card.

\$2,699 list price  
Quantex MicroSystems  
(800) 787-8886, (908) 563-4166  
Reader Service No. 702



Excellent



Good



Acceptable



Poor



Unacceptable



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## Affordable Color Ink-jet Alternative

If you're on the fence about whether to shell out big bucks for a color laser printer, or stick with a low-price ink jet that offers solid color output but average text quality, then you may want to consider another option: Citizen's dry-ink Printiva 600C. For just \$550, the Printiva 600C gives you superb output quality at an affordable price.

The Printiva 600C uses a proprietary technology from Citizen called micro dry process. Rather than using toner or liquid ink, the printer has small, cassette-like tapes that consist of a fine ink powder, which is heated and fused to the page. The result? Vibrant colors with more staying power than ink-jet hues.

The technology isn't perfect—we noticed slight registration problems that resulted in



**Continuous Tones:** Citizen's Printiva 600C uses a unique dry-ink printing process that produces colors brighter than any you'll see from an ink-jet printer.

subtle white lines around vector graphics. And solid colors other than black had minor dithering patterns that, upon close inspection, detracted from the overall output quality.

Also, the Printiva 600C is slow. A 3-page presentation

with mixed text and graphics took more than 15 minutes to print, while an 11-page text-only document took about the same amount of time.

We were also unimpressed with the Printiva 600C's software. The drivers provide a fair

### FILEBOX

#### Printiva 600C



**Verdict:** You'd swear the color pages came from a printer that's twice as expensive—but print speeds are slow.

**Pros:** Plain-paper color output means a low cost per page.

**Cons:** It's slow, and the accompanying software is limited.

\$550 est. street price  
Citizen America Corp.  
(800) 477-4683, (310) 453-0614  
Reader Service No. 703

amount of control, but you can get to them only through setup options in your application.

Still, if you're looking for an inexpensive alternative to a color laser or ink-jet printer, Citizen's Printiva 600C is a fine choice. **KYLA K. CARLSON**

## Hewlett-Packard DeskJet 820Cse

## Professional Color on a Shoestring

### SNEAK PREVIEW

If you work out of a home or small office, you're held to the same high standards of a large corporation. Translation? If you want your documents to get noticed, they simply must be colorful. Hewlett-Packard's new DeskJet 820Cse generates professional-looking, plain-paper color documents for a very affordable \$399.

The DeskJet 820Cse's output quality is first-rate. Colors are smooth, vibrant, and crisp. Plain-paper output means a lower cost per page: Expect to spend just 3 cents per page for black text and 8 cents per page for color. On plain paper, the



**Designer Hues:** HP's \$399 DeskJet 820Cse delivers exceptional color output and fast print speeds.

DeskJet 820Cse's output was superior to that of Canon's BJC-4100C and Epson's Stylus Pro. On coated paper, however, the DeskJet 820Cse can't match the near-photo-quality images you get with Epson's 720-by-720-dpi output.

Resolutions for the DeskJet 820Cse hit only 600 by 600 dpi for black text and 600 by 300 dpi for color. But with these lower resolutions, you get significantly higher speeds. In our tests, the DeskJet 820Cse printed pages an impressive 40 percent faster than Canon's

BJC-4100, and 15 to 60 percent faster (depending on the type of file) than Epson's Stylus Pro.

Given its low price, excellent plain-paper output, and competitive speeds, HP's DeskJet 820Cse is a great addition to any desktop. **KYLA K. CARLSON**

### FILEBOX

#### DeskJet 820Cse



**Verdict:** An outstanding, low-cost, color ink-jet printer.

**Pros:** Respectable solid-color, plain-paper output for presentations and other color documents. It's also faster and cheaper than comparable ink-jet printers.

**Cons:** For printing detailed color photo images, Epson's Stylus Pro is still tops.

**Cost per Page:** 3 cents for black text, 8 cents for color.

\$399 est. street price  
Hewlett-Packard  
(800) 752-0900, (408) 246-4300  
Reader Service No. 704



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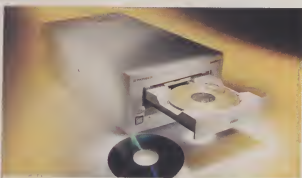




## Record Your Own CDs—Fast

Burning CD-ROMs can be a hassle. Most CD-recordable drives are difficult to use and write data at a snail's pace. The exception? Pioneer's DW-S114X CD Recorder. It writes data at blazing quad-speed rates, and you don't have to be a rocket scientist to use it.

The DW-S114X is an external SCSI-2 drive, and a bit on the large side (8 inches wide by 16 inches long). But don't let its bulky exterior mislead you—this drive is a high performer that writes data at speeds of up to 614KBps. That makes a huge difference when you have a lot of discs to create and not a lot of time to do it. For organizing the files you want to record, Pioneer includes Incat Systems' Easy CD Pro mastering software,



**CD Studio:** Pioneer's quad-speed DW-S114X CD Recorder includes Incat's excellent Easy CD Pro software for simple CD-ROM burning.

which earned high marks for usability in our CD-recordable drive roundup (see "Roll Your Own CD-ROM," August 1995, page 183). Easy CD Pro makes recording CDs as simple as drag and click.

At \$3,495, Pioneer's drive is pricey. If you prefer another software package, such as Corel's CD Creator, get the bare-bones DW-S114X and save \$200. You can find cheaper CD-recordable drives,

including Smart & Friendly's double-speed sub-\$1,000 CD-R 1002. But if you want fast quad-speed recording rates and Plug and Play installation, Pioneer's DW-S114X is the best in its class. **DYLAN TWENY**

### FILEBOX

#### **DW-S114X CD Recorder**



**Verdict:** Fast and easy; ideal for high-volume CD recording.

**Pros:** You get fast quad-speed performance and Incat's Easy CD Pro software.

**Cons:** It's expensive and a little bigger than other models.

\$3,495 est. street price  
Pioneer New Media  
(800) 444-6784, (310) 952-2111  
Reader Service No. 705

## Hewlett-Packard ScanJet 4Si

## Scan from Your LAN

Imagine the productivity boost of having your own personal document scanner. You'd banish that pile of paper in no time. But a desktop scanner for everyone in your office? Dream on. The next best solution is Hewlett-Packard's ScanJet 4Si, a document scanner that coworkers share via a NetWare network.

The ScanJet 4Si delivers 8-bit, grayscale, flatbed scanning for text, line art, and photos at 300 by 1,200 dpi. Granted, you still have to walk down the hall to scan your document, but once it's scanned, you can send it to your desktop or to anyone else on the network. Use the scanner as a copier by sending the job to your networked printer. Once



**Paper Chase:** HP's ScanJet 4Si conquers the paper pile by letting everyone on a network share the same black-and-white scanner.

the ScanJet is hooked up to the server, there are no TWAIN drivers to fiddle with—just click on the Go button and you're off and scanning.

The ScanJet 4Si ships with a 20-user license for Visioneer's PaperPort 3.0 software, which lets you manage, edit, and copy your documents. PaperPort comes with OCR and lets you link to your fax, e-mail, and other applications. And with the help of the included 50-page, automatic document feeder for batch scanning, you can scan up to 15 letter-size pages per minute.

Unfortunately, the ScanJet 4Si doesn't handle color, which makes its \$2,999 price tag seem extreme. Unless, of course, you compare that to the cost of purchasing a less expensive, black-and-white document scanner for every person in the office.

**LIESL LA GRANGE NOBLE**

### FILEBOX

#### **ScanJet 4Si**



**Verdict:** Easy network scanning—why didn't anyone think of it sooner?

**Pros:** Simple to set up and use.

**Cons:** No color support.

**Competition:** Several stand-alone document scanners offer similar document management for single users, but only the ScanJet 4Si covers an entire LAN.

**System Requirements:**  
386 CPU, 8.5MB of RAM,  
15.5MB of hard disk space for  
server, NetWare 3.1 or later.

\$2,999 for Ethernet,  
\$3,199 for Token Ring  
Hewlett-Packard  
(800) 722-6538, (408) 246-4300  
Reader Service No. 706







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## Expand Your LAN to the Internet

Searching for a simple, cost-effective way to link your LAN to the Internet? Or an inexpensive way to link two or more remote LANs? Either way, Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) is the answer to your prayers—and it's gaining popularity. To connect your office through one ISDN line, your best bet is to hook up an ISDN router, which is an Ethernet-ISDN modem that everyone on the network can share.

Two ISDN routers aimed at small offices are Ascend Communications' Pipeline 50 and Shiva's ShivaIntegrator 100. While both products have serious shortcomings in usability, the Pipeline is slightly easier to install and configure, and it's a better choice if your main concern is linking your LAN to the Internet. Installing the ShivaIntegrator requires patience, thorough ISDN knowledge, and a lengthy technical-support phone call. But the Integrator is an affordable way to link two remote networks, especially if you're running a NetWare network.

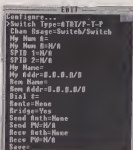
**Putting Up Pipe** The \$1,595 Pipeline 50 sports a sleek design and front-panel LEDs that indicate power status, diagnostics, and Ethernet and ISDN activity. We connected both the Pipeline and the Integrator to a desktop PC running Windows 95. Unfortunately, both routers required terminal-emulation software for setup and configuration.

Installing the Pipeline was easy; plugging in all the complicated ISDN information using HyperTerminal was a bit more difficult. Once it's set up, however, the Pipeline is an easy and affordable way to supply the entire office with fast



**Network to the World:** Ascend's Pipeline 50 (top) ISDN router is an affordable way to connect everyone on a LAN to the Internet. ShivaIntegrator 100 uses ISDN to turn various LANs into a wide-area network.

**Terminal, Anyone?** Both the Pipeline 50 (right) and the ShivaIntegrator 100 use archaic terminal programs for installation and configuration. A simple Windows-based setup wizard would be a welcome addition to both products.



Internet access. The Pipeline handles connections of up to 128Kbps and supports MultiLink PPP. It's also the first router to support a technique called bandwidth on demand (BOD), a great money saver since it adds or disconnects ISDN channels on the fly, depending on how many people are connected to the Internet at a time. Finally, with the Pipeline you need only one Internet address per router, while Integrator requires two.

**Linking LANs** The \$1,099 ShivaIntegrator is more than twice the physical size of the Pipeline unit and includes the same front-panel diagnostic LEDs. The ShivaIntegrator's setup guide gets you started by

leading you through a helpful introduction and basic information on router operation. But from there, installation and configuration are difficult and confusing.

Once it's set up, however, the Integrator is an excellent solution for connecting remote networks, since it minimizes ISDN service charges. Many businesses that use ISDN routers to link two LANs incur staggering monthly ISDN fees. That's because NetWare sends out maintenance-information packets every few minutes, thereby opening ISDN channels. Although these exchanges last only a few seconds, most ISDN services bill users by the minute. The

### FILEBOX

#### Pipeline 50



**Verdict:** Capable ISDN router for connecting your network to the Internet.

**Pros:** Requires only one Internet address per person. MultiLink PPP and ISDN channels are scaled up and down as needed.

**Cons:** Like all routers, it's difficult to set up and configure.

\$1,595 est. street price  
Ascend Communications  
(800) 272-3634, (510) 769-6001  
Reader Service No. 698

#### ShivaIntegrator 100



**Verdict:** An inexpensive way to link several LANs using ISDN.

**Pros:** Reduces unneeded NetWare traffic over ISDN lines.

**Cons:** Cryptic terminal-based configuration makes for setup headaches.

\$1,099 est. street price  
Shiva Corp.  
(800) 977-4482, (617) 270-8300  
Reader Service No. 699

ShivaIntegrator stops unnecessary NetWare packets at the router, opening the ISDN connection only when real data is moving through the line.

ISDN is a relatively fast and cheap way to connect LANs and hook into the Internet. But its speed and low cost are overshadowed by inexcusably difficult router setup. A simple, well-designed Windows wizard that walks you through every step of setup and installation is sorely needed. This is especially important because the Pipeline and the ShivaIntegrator are targeted at small, branch offices, which often can't afford to have a dedicated network staff. **SCOTT NAYLOR**

AND RICH SCHWERN



# ¶

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NEW DELRINA WINFAX PRO 7.0 FOR WINDOWS 95.)

Alas, Delrina developers still haven't figured out how to fax into someone's brain after 11 P.M. (when rates are lower) without waking him or her up.

WM Fortunately, their latest release – new Delrina WinFax™ PRO 7.0 – is as easy and powerful as one would expect from the best-selling, most award-winning fax software in the world. It fully exploits new Windows® 95's 32-bit

Designed for



Microsoft  
Windows 95

multi-tasking, multi-threading talents for true background faxing, greater speed and more. But it doesn't stop there. WM With the new TalkWorks™ telephony option and your voice modem, WinFax PRO 7.0 turns your computer into an integrated in-box for faxes, e-mail and voice mail. It even takes phone messages, distinguishes



between fax and voice calls, has fax on demand and identifies callers before you pick up. WM And there's more. Built-in compression cuts fax transmission time (and phone bills) by up to one-third. It now supports gray-scale faxing, integrates with Microsoft® Exchange, and includes OCR, 101 ready-to-use fax cover sheets and tools to design your own.

WM You can even get WinFax PRO as part of new Delrina CommSuite™ 95, the complete, affordable, integrated communications software solution for Windows 95. WM All of which should suffice until the new alpha wave faxing program is ready. (Hmm. Perhaps if we *partition* your brain so that one half can receive faxes while the other remains undisturbed...) **DELRINA**

Circle 182 on reader service card.

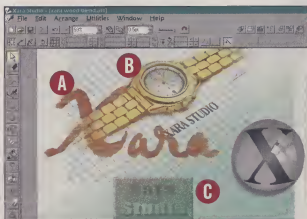
## CorelXara

# Fast and Easy Web Graphics

The problem with most high-end graphics programs is that they're slow. Even on the fastest hardware you spend more time staring at the hourglass than at your illustrations. Corel's unique new vector-drawing program, CorelXara, is a remarkably powerful package that creates sophisticated graphics without slowing you down. It's also the first to include instant anti-aliasing for smooth onscreen images—ideal for creating Web graphics.

**Crisp and Clear** One of CorelXara's benefits is immediately apparent: Everything looks great onscreen because of anti-aliasing, a technique that blends the edges of objects into their backgrounds. This blending creates an illusion of high-resolution images by eliminating the jagged, pixelated look of low-resolution graphics. Images you view and export are automatically anti-aliased without slowing your system's performance. As a result, you see smoother graphics onscreen and display cleaner graphics on your Web pages.

CorelXara's transparency feature is live and unlimited—you can make anything transparent, from a gradient fill to a bitmap image. This means you can create illustrations that previously would have required a photo-editing program such as Adobe's Photoshop. But because CorelXara is an object-oriented application (rather than a bitmap program), objects can easily be moved and changed at any time. Although you can't edit a scanned photo image with



### See-through Effects:

CorelXara is the only illustration program for Windows and Macintosh that can make any object transparent, even gradient fills and bitmaps. It also features anti-aliasing and lightning-fast redraws.

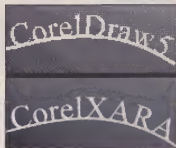
### No Jaggies:

Unlike CorelDraw 5, CorelXara's anti-aliasing makes graphics appear smooth onscreen—this is especially valuable for Web graphics.

A. The word Xara is a bitmap that was used as a fill for text and then made transparent.

B. This watch face has thousands of objects, but because of CorelXara's intelligent caching, it redraws in seconds.

C. A gradient was placed on top of other objects to illustrate that even gradient screens can be transparent.



CorelXara, you can manipulate it by applying filter effects and color correction.

CorelXara's drawing and editing tools use traditional illustration metaphors. Even better, the program lets you zoom to an incredibly precise 25,601 percent.

Text handling is one area in which CorelXara has limitations—there's no automatic paragraph-wrap feature. Also,

the program doesn't support Pantone spot colors.

**Fast Redraws** But CorelXara's limitations are rather insignificant when compared with the program's features and speed. It loads, saves, and exports large files in seconds. Even the most complex graphics redraw quickly. This feature alone will save you hours when creating complex illustrations. Moreover, CorelXara

## FILEBOX

### CorelXara



**Verdict:** A groundbreaking illustration package; ideal for creating Web graphics.

**Pros:** Works with vector and bitmap images; best anti-aliasing feature of any illustration package; superb redrawing performance; live transparency feature; dramatic file compression.

**Cons:** Doesn't offer complete text-manipulation features like those found in high-end page-layout programs; doesn't support Pantone colors.

**Competition:** CorelXara's new anti-aliasing and transparency features are unmatched. However, traditional products like CorelDraw, Macromedia's FreeHand, Adobe's Illustrator, and Micrografx's Designer are better suited for page-layout tasks that involve a lot of text.

**System Requirements:** Windows 3.1 or Windows 95, 486 CPU, 8MB of RAM, CD-ROM drive, 8MB of hard disk space.

\$189 est. street price  
Corel Corp.  
(800) 836-3729, (613) 728-8200  
Reader Service No. 710

saves files in a proprietary compressed format. So a file that takes 100K of disk space in CorelDraw 5 would use only 10K in CorelXara.

CorelXara won't replace a high-end photo-editing or page-layout program, but it certainly signals the dawn of higher standards for all graphics apps. And for creating smooth Web graphics, it's exceptional. **DANIEL WILL-HARRIS**

Guide to the Ratings: ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★★ Good ★★★★★ Acceptable ★★★★★ Poor ★★★★★ Unacceptable



# The Painter's Paint Program

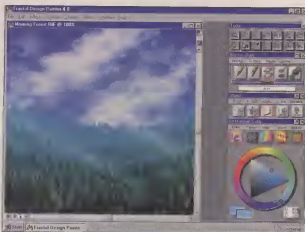
**SNEAK  
PREVIEW**

Fractal Design's Painter is known for its natural-media approach to creating digital art: Its brush tools feel and behave like actual brushes, the chalk tool leaves powdery sketch marks on the page, and drawing surfaces are textured. The latest release, Painter 4.0, offers even more special effects and artistic possibilities for the digital art studio.

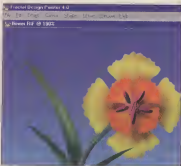
**Paint the Web** Without a doubt, the most intriguing addition to Painter 4.0 is a feature called Net Painter, a remote painting option that lets you electronically collaborate in real time with other Painter users over a local area network, the Internet, or any TCP/IP connection. And because the program sends simple instructions instead of pixels, a basic 14.4Kbps or 28.8Kbps modem will do for online sessions. Take turns working on a project, or simply get some feedback through the chat window.

Net Painter does have some limitations—you can't see the zooms or pans your colleagues make, and collaborators all need the same resources (plug-in filters, objects, file versions, and so on) for it to work smoothly. Also, file transfers are very slow. But even so, Net Painter is one of the most inventive and useful features we've seen in a graphics program.

Painter 4.0 builds on the previous version's support for GIF and JPEG graphics by letting you create image maps for Web pages. These now-familiar maps are the navigating graphics you see on many Web pages; Painter 4.0 lets you tag any portion of a graphic and give it a Web link by associating it with a URL address.



**Digital Canvas:** Painter 4.0's trademark Image Hose makes it easy to "spray" trees, clouds, and other images onto a canvas, doing in minutes what might otherwise take hours. Also new to this version are real-time Internet collaboration tools.



**Photo Collage:** This flower was created with shapes and gradients, illustrating Painter 4.0's ability to combine vector and raster images.

Obviously, you can't create full Web pages with Painter, but you can apply all of Painter's sophistication and subtlety to graphics, and easily integrate those graphics into the pages you design. Also, Painter challenges its graphics counterparts in the photo-retouching and drawing fields by reading and writing files in Adobe's Photoshop 3.0 format, and importing and exporting Adobe's Illustrator 5.0 files (which CorelDraw and Macromedia's FreeHand support).

**Smart Shapes** Why bring the vector-based objects of a drawing into a raster-based

painting program? Because Painter 4.0 blurs the lines between the two formats—both literally and figuratively. Painter 4.0 branches out from its raster roots with a full set of PostScript drawing tools, called Shapes, which work with Painter 4.0's bitmap editing tools. Better still, objects can be made semi-transparent or layered, and you can group them with bitmap selections. You can even convert them into raster images and paint over them.

In Painter's previous version, the Image Hose tool was added for "spraying" images

across a canvas—this feature gets better nozzles in Painter 4.0. The upgrade also includes a Mosaic brush tool, which lets you create tiles either on a blank canvas or over an existing picture.

Painter 4.0's natural painting tools let you create images—and share your creations—in ways other illustration programs don't. While Painter 4.0 can be intimidating for people who don't have much experience with computer-generated art (mainly because they get lost in its bag of goodies), it's hard to fault a program for being this ingenious. **CHRIS O'MALLEY**

## FILEBOX

### Painter 4.0



**Verdict:** The best natural-media painting program on the market gains Internet smarts.

**Pros:** Adds scores of new drawing and painting tools; offers collaborative painting modules for use over a LAN or the Internet; brings vector-based objects into a raster-based paint program; creates image maps for Web pages; supports multiple file formats.

**Cons:** You can't share the panning and zooming features with other users when working in collaborative mode; file transfers can be slow.

**Competition:** Adobe's Illustrator and CorelDraw are still better vector-drawing programs, and Adobe's Photoshop and Micrografx's Picture Publisher are better photo editors.

**System Requirements:** Windows 95, 12MB of RAM, 24MB of hard disk space. CD-ROM or floppy disk available.

5379 est. street price  
Fractal Design Corp.  
(800) 287-2885, (408) 688-5300  
Reader Service No. 711



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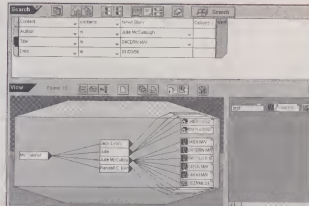
## Progress on the Paper Trail

Document managers are like presidential candidates: They all want the same job, but they have very different ideas on how to do it. But at least document managers are getting smarter with age, as XSoft's Visual Recall 2.0 and MindWorks' Recollect Gold demonstrate.

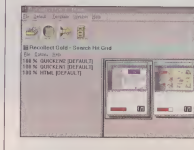
Visual Recall's first version was a landmark product in the document-management field, and so is version 2.0. As its name implies, Visual Recall 2.0 goes beyond the usual text-based search results when it scours your documents. It creates 3-D charts that show trends and themes in its Grid view or a hierarchy in its Tree view. It can also generate tabular lists. Although all of these views are a bit mind-boggling at first, they present fresh, interesting ways to look at documents—it's like having a Big Picture button on your electronic folders.

**Total Recall** The first version of Visual Recall offered fine searching and indexing tools, as well as several sophisticated touches, such as its ability to find different forms of a given word (*mice* and *mouse*, for example). In its rush to make things graphical, however, it failed to include an effective way to summarize and browse through document text, or a way to quickly access information through external applications. Version 2.0 has both.

The program's new Excerpts Browser automatically identifies and extracts a document's key points for your perusal. And you can now run Visual Recall searches or browse from within Microsoft's Office and Novell's PerfectOffice. Visual Recall supports the Open Document Management API (ODMA), and it also has a



**3-D Tree:** Document-management tools are getting smarter. A case in point is XSoft's Visual Recall 2.0, which includes unique, relational 3-D viewing tools and the Excerpts Browser, a text-summary tool that plucks key passages from documents.



**Quick Preview:** Recollect Gold's Thumbnail Hit Grid uses words and pictures to show search results, and ranks documents by relevance.

direct link to Microsoft's Mail.

Visual Recall is designed primarily for use on NetWare LANs, although it can be used as a local document manager as well. Xerox's TextBridge OCR software is included.

**Change of View** Depending on your point of view, Recollect Gold is either less ambitious or more straightforward than Visual Recall. It uses the electronic file-cabinet metaphor more literally, applying it to desktop items like in-boxes and out-boxes, and is designed to efficiently scan and store your documents. But it's not without a few sorting tricks of its own.

A document scanned into Recollect Gold is automatically filtered by its built-in OCR

software, and keywords are automatically identified and indexed. Its fuzzy search logic compensates for any OCR errors when you try to retrieve documents. That process isn't perfect, but it greatly improves your odds of finding the documents you need. You can also create templates that index specific data on scanned forms, indexing only account numbers, for example. A new feature called Portable Document Indexing creates a separate index for each document, making each fully searchable on any other computer running Recollect Gold.

While it doesn't provide anything as fancy as Visual Recall's 3-D views, Recollect Gold does offer a lot of solid

information on what it finds—and some basic visual perspective as well. Its Thumbnail Hit Grid shows not only the names of the documents and percentage of search words it finds, but also a miniature version, or thumbnail, of the first page of each document. A red bar at the bottom of each thumbnail indicates the document's relevance to the search term.

There's plenty of substance in both of these document managers, but choosing one comes down to style. Visual Recall is more graphical and analytical, but Recollect Gold is very adept at the day-to-day business of collecting and retrieving information. Either one will help you tame the paper tiger.

CHRIS O'MALLEY

### FILEBOX

#### Recollect Gold



**Verdict:** A straightforward, powerful document scanner and retriever.

**Pros:** Designed to quickly scan and store documents.

**Cons:** No ground breaking innovations; just the basics.

5349 est. street price  
MindWorks Corp.  
(800) 398-6463, (408) 730-2100  
Reader Service No. 712

#### Visual Recall 2.0



**Verdict:** An innovative document manager with unique 3-D views.

**Pros:** Presents fresh ways to view your documents.

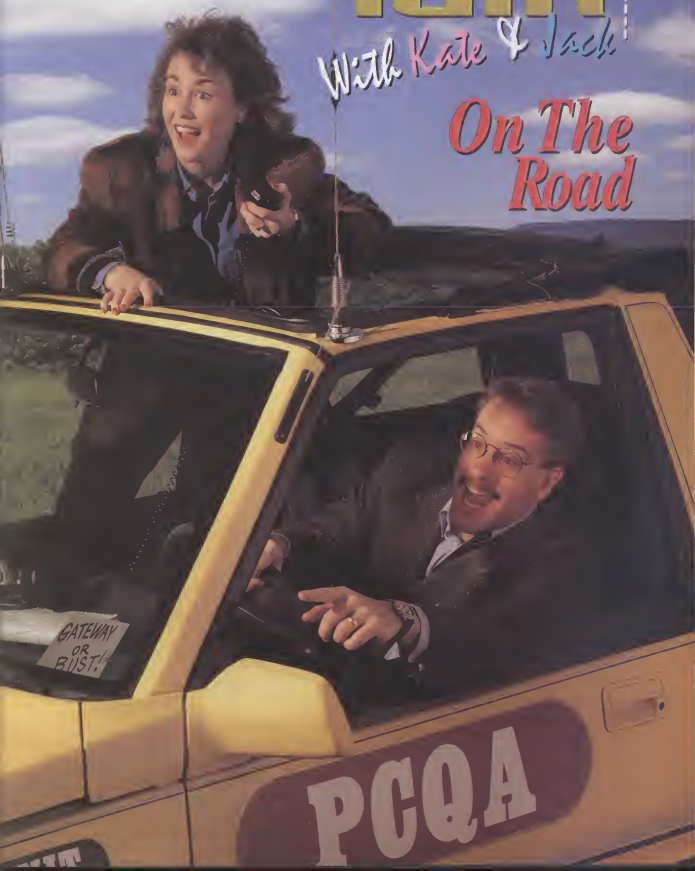
**Cons:** Its sophisticated tools may be overkill for personal use.

\$395 list price per client;  
\$695 list price per server  
XSoft/Xerox Corp.  
(800) 428-2995, (415) 813-6920  
Reader Service No. 713

# PC Talk

With Kate & Jack

On The  
Road



# PC Talk

With Kate & Jack

May 2000

Quality  
Policy

At Gateway 2000,  
we are committed  
to an environment of  
productivity and "winning"  
which includes the  
highest quality of our  
products and services.  
Through a variety of  
initiatives, we ensure  
that our customers  
receive the highest  
quality products and  
services available.  
We are committed  
to the highest quality  
products and services  
available.

Gateway

Jack  
PCQA

PCQA



**Kate:** Good morning and mega power from South Dakota!

This is "PC Talk with Kate and Jack — On the Road" broadcasting live from Gateway 2000 headquarters in North Sioux City, South Dakota.

**Jack:** When we heard that Gateway had developed a whole new computer category for the entire family, we decided to jump in the PCQA mobile and check it out for ourselves. All this fresh Midwestern air

has us perkier than a double espresso! Aren't you glad I scored that invite from Gateway 2000 Chairman and CEO Ted Waitt?

**Kate:** Yeah, yeah, whatever. Let's tell the folks out there about the coolest thing we've seen today at Gateway. When we first walked into the cow-spotted mega building, we heard this incredible booming stereo sound. It sounded like a movie theater, and it was coming from a dark secluded area.

**Jack:** We looked inside, and lo and behold, there was a honkin' Destination31 monitor (31" viewable) — just like the one delivered to the station the day we talked to Ted.

**Kate:** But this was more than just the monitor, it was the whole Destination Big Screen PC including the fabulous wireless keyboard and Field Mouse™ remote! The Gateway crew had put it in an entertainment center and built a family room setting in their test lab. When we got there, at least a dozen people were lounging on the sofa and playing the sports car game *The Need For Speed™*.

**Jack:** Jeff from Jersey City is dying to get through on the phone. Fire away, Jeff!

**Jeff:** You've seen the Destination system? I've been wild to get one ever since I heard Gateway was coming out with it.

**Kate:** Now's your chance, Jeff. The Destination Big Screen PC has blown the PC market open with a totally new category of computer. Gateway's Destination Big

Screen PC is the result of the convergence of the PC and the TV — it will revolutionize computer use in the home.



**Mary:** What's the deal with these "wireless devices"?

**Kate:** They function exactly like your standard keyboard and mouse but without the wires. You can use

them while lounging on the couch, walking around or standing in back of a group of people. Because they use radio frequency technology, these wireless devices have more range than an all-star shortstop.

**Mary:** Sounds like they are just as convenient as my TV remote.

**Jack:** Even more so, Mary. With the wireless keyboard and Field Mouse remote, you don't have to

point at the monitor like you do with a traditional remote. The keyboard and mouse have all the buttons you need to control every function.

**Jack:** Don't forget anything you can do with a TV, you can do with the Destination system — run cable TV to it, connect your satellite dish or VCR, even your laser disc system or game machine. Plus the Destination Big Screen PC is designed to work with your stereo system, so you'll experience the quality sound you receive from your stereo.

**Mary:** Can the Destination system still function as a basic computer system?

**Kate:** Absolutely. It has all the horses of a Pentium processor with plenty of RAM and a huge hard drive. Plus it's chained to a fast CD-ROM drive. Happy computing!



The Destination® Big Screen PC features a fast Pentium® processor, cable-ready TV tuner, Destination31 monitor (31" viewable), wireless keyboard and Field Mouse™ remote, and Destination Software Collection starting at only \$3,499.



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S O L O™

**Stan:** I love it! It's great to be part of a company that cares about its customers and its employees. This place has an unbelievable team spirit. We have a good time, but we know that our first priority is to send quality, high-performance PCs out the door every day. We're really into quality assurance — in fact, our manufacturing facility here in North Sioux City is ISO 9002 certified.

**Kate:** Hey, look over there. Is that who I think it is?

**Jack:** It's Gateway Chairman and CEO Ted Waitt.

**Ted:** Kate and Jack! Thanks for coming to visit us out here.

**Jack:** This is where all the hot PC industry news is, Ted. Thanks for getting us a look at the new Destination® Big Screen PC and the rest of your amazing products. Hey, I noticed your office is upstairs. Do you get down here often?

**Ted:** Now and then. I started out in manufacturing — along with sales and technical support, plus a little engineering, a little advertising, a little shipping — you name it, I've done it. We all work as a team here to provide our customers with the latest technology at a great price.

**Kate:** After seeing the amazing energy of your team, now I know how you bring high quality products to the market at such incredible values.

**Ted:** It's the employees who set us apart. They take pride in what they do, and have a lot of ideas on how we can make our products better. We're dedicated to making sure every PC that goes out the door is a quality machine. Every Gateway employee worldwide takes this responsibility very seriously.



**Jack:** Whoa! That's quite a concept!

**Ted:** I hope you had a good time today. Stay as long as you like, but you might want to check out the PCQA mobile.

**Kate:** Why's that, Ted?

**Ted:** Well, the folks painting cow spots on the building got carried away. Your PCQA mobile is now cow spotted!

**Jack:** Cool! Now we're part of the Gateway family. C'mon, Kate — let's cruise!



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- 10.4" SVGA Color Display
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- 8MB RAM (expandable to 40MB)
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- EZ Pad Pointing Device
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- Lithium Ion Battery & AC Pack
- EZ Pad Pointing Device
- 86-Key MS Windows 95 Keyboard
- Parallel, Serial, Infrared, VGA & PS/2 Ports
- Built-In Mic, Headphone and Line-In Jacks and External Volume Control Dial
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- Integrated 16-Bit Sound with Stereo Speakers
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- Lithium Ion Battery & AC Pack
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- EZ Pad Pointing Device
- 86-Key MS Windows 95 Keyboard
- Parallel, Serial, Infrared, VGA & PS/2 Ports
- Built-In Mic, Headphone and Line-In Jacks and External Volume Control Dial
- 11.8" x 8.8" x 2.0"
- Microsoft Windows 95
- MS Office 95, Professional Edition\*
- Carrying Case

**\$5599**

The Gateway Solo line starts at 5.4 lbs. Weight includes 8MB RAM, 810MB hard drive, Lithium Ion battery & option bay cover.



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Portable Sales





**Jack:** We're sitting here in the shadow of the Destination® Big Screen PC — staring at the whoppin' 31-inch VGA monitor and fooling with the fabulous wireless devices. Kate's so comfortable with the keyboard on the couch, that she's dashing off e-mail to her mom. Tom from Tampa, you're on the air with Kate and Jack!

**Tom:** Mega power, Jack. I had planned to purchase a Gateway P5-166XL multimedia in a couple weeks. But now I'm considering a Destination Big Screen PC. What options do I have?

**Jack:** Gateway 2000 had its valued customers, like you, in mind while they were designing this new product, so they came up with the Destination Big Screen PC package. It's very simple to convert a Gateway Multimedia system into a Destination Big Screen PC. You get the Destination31 color monitor (31-inch viewable), Destination 2MB VRAM graphics accelerator with cable-ready TV tuner, hi-fi wavetable audio card, four-channel wireless keyboard with integrated EZ Pad™ pointing device and wireless Field Mouse™ remote, and Destination software collection. Your sales rep can give you the entire scoop. Thanks for calling, Tom!

**Kate:** Mike from Memphis wants to talk about the burly power of Gateway's G6 machines.

**Mike:** Sounds like Gateway is moving into the family room big time with its Destination Big Screen PC. But don't forget their workstations. That Gateway G6-150 is one of the best workstation values in the industry — I just ordered another one today for my accounting business.

**Jack:** Wow! Tell us more!

**Mike:** I need an ultra-high performance PC with MS Windows® NT™ 3.51 to squeeze every speck of performance out of 32-bit software applications like those in Microsoft® Office 95, Professional Edition. The G6-150 was the perfect solution for my intensive computing. The clincher was the price — just \$3,199.

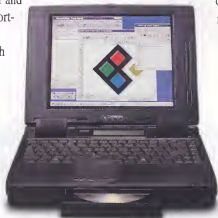
**Jack:** Yow, that's an intense value, Mike. I bet the accounting crew at the station is drooling at the thought of a 32-bit screamer at such an amazing price. And Gateway customers can also upgrade

their Pentium® processor-based desktop PCs to Windows NT 3.51 for an additional \$99. MS Windows for Workgroups 3.11 is also available on Gateway's Intel® Pentium processor-based desktop and portable systems. Thanks for the call, Mike!

**Jack:** I just met Jennifer who works in engineering when I noticed the huge screen image on her Gateway Solo™ portable PC.

**Jennifer:** We've upped the ante in high-quality portable PCs by offering an even bigger screen. All Gateway Solo portable PCs are now available with 11.3-inch active matrix SVGA color screens — a 17% increase in viewable screen area compared to the 10.4-inch screen.

**Kate:** Amazing. Gateway has come out with a ton of cool stuff on their Solo portable PCs like the modular 4X CD-ROM drive, the EZ Pad™ pointing device and now this humongous new screen. What will they come up with next? Tory from Tulsa, you're on the air!



**Tory:** I've had my Gateway Solo S5-75XL portable PC for just a couple of weeks, but I'm already nuts about it. It has all the capabilities of a desktop PC in a portable

package — a powerful Pentium processor, 8MB RAM, 256K pipelined burst cache, plus 16-bit sound and speakers. And like all Gateway Solo portable PCs it has a modular 4X CD-ROM drive that whips through multimedia apps in no time, plus when I want to kick back, I can just drop in my favorite CD. All that for only \$2,899.

**Kate:** That's a hot price for a multimedia portable PC. And that 4X CD-ROM drive is a screamer — it's one of the fastest CD-ROM drives you can find in a portable PC. Thanks for the call!



**Jennifer:** Hey, you guys can't leave without seeing manufacturing. That place is always hopping!

**Jack:** Sounds good. We're heading down there right now!

**Kate:** Jennifer was right, manufacturing is rockin'. As we speak, I'm holding the packing slip for a PC ordered by Kay from Kansas City. She's getting a P5-166XL multimedia PC complete with an 8X EIDE CD-ROM drive and a 2.5GB EIDE hard drive. I didn't think this stuff was even on the market yet.

**Jack:** Let's get a word with Stan. He's one of the assembly technicians putting the final touches on Kay's mean multimedia machine. So Stan what's it like to work for the nation's leading direct PC marketer?

**P5-100 FAMILY PC™**

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### CINEMANIA 96 ○○○○○

Cinemania 96 doesn't have the most film listings or clips, but it's so well designed, it's the only movie guide that can be even better than watching a movie. This is how a Windows CD should be—rich contents pasted together with an interface that's fun and easy to use. There ought to be more film clips, but from Bogie in *Casablanca* to Hal in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, each clip is a bona fide classic. In addition to credits and awards for each film, the disc includes publicity stills, film-history articles, and full-length film reviews by Roger Ebert, Pauline Kael, and Leonard Maltin. You can also download monthly updates from Microsoft Network. And Cinemania has a snappy search engine, plus Cinemania Suggests, which lets you select films based on category—A Good Laugh or Thrills and Chills. You can save and print the list for

your next trip to the video store. But you could wind up having so much fun with Cinemania 96 that you never make it there.

**Cinemania 96** / Microsoft Corp. / (800) 426-9400, (206) 882-8080 / \$35 est. street price / Reader Service No. 716



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In this corner, the winner for sheer number of movies listed on a CD: Corel's All-Movie Guide. This Windows and Macintosh CD has detailed information on 90,000 movies. If a title isn't here, the videotape you rented must have fallen off a flying saucer. This disc has no movie or sound clips, but what it lacks in multimedia, it makes up for in data—any fact you could want from cast to audience ratings to gross revenues. All-Movie Guide



**The Envelope, Please . . .** All-Movie Guide wins for the most titles.



has a search wizard, and a plot finder that can lead to story devices such as imaginary friends, spurned love, and nuclear holocaust. Films are scored with a star-rating system, with bar graphs for popularity, artistic quality, and other factors. If you click on thumbs-up or thumbs-down on the names of movies you like or hate, All-Movie Guide looks for patterns in your choices, and suggests other films you're likely to enjoy or not. The search produces such strange bedfellows as *Rocky III* and *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure*. Don't question the reasoning. Go with the force, and see where computer fate takes you.

**All-Movie Guide** / Corel Corp. / (800) 772-6735, (613) 728-3733 / \$19 est. street price / Reader Service No. 717



### BLOCKBUSTER VIDEO GUIDE TO MOVIES & VIDEOS ○○○

If the Blockbuster membership card in your wallet is more accessible than your driver's license, this is the CD for you. But even if you find a movie you'd like to rent in this CD, there's still no guarantee that your local Blockbuster store actually stocks it, or that it isn't already checked out. At least this Windows CD lets you know if it's on Blockbuster's master list. In general, this is not a bad movie guide—there are film clips (many of them trailers) and tidbits on movie stars. It doesn't allow for extensive searching, but it's fun to prowl. Be warned, however: This CD never met a movie it didn't like. Mediocre films get suspiciously high ratings. After all, Blockbuster is in business to rent movies, not criticize them.

**Blockbuster Video Guide to Movies & Videos** / Creative Multimedia / (800) 262-7668, (503) 241-4351 / \$20 est. street price; \$3 for monthly updates / Reader Service No. 718

○○○○○ *Citizen Kane*. ○○○○ *Star Wars*. ○○○ *Waterworld*. ○○ *Halloween V*.

● *Plan 9 from Outer Space*.



**Eye-popping Effects:** Behind the Mask is fun for special-effects buffs.



## BEHIND THE MASK ○○○

I can't help thinking that the in-depth attention lavished on *The Mask* in this disc would be more appropriate for a film such as *Citizen Kane*. But then in *Citizen Kane*, Orson Welles doesn't turn into a creature whose tongue falls out of his mouth, and eyes pop out of his head. Behind the Mask is a great Windows CD for special-effects fans. Story boards, raw footage, and complete scenes show how the spectacular effects in *The Mask* were achieved. The CD also has the complete script, but come on, who wants to read *The Mask*?

**Behind the Mask** / Turner Home Entertainment / (800) 294-0022 / \$30 est. street price / Reader Service No. 719



## MEGA MOVIE GUIDE 3.5 ○○○

This is a bargain-basement movie guide with a lot of information and 40 film clips, more than a dozen of them trailers. Trailers are fun, but I can't help thinking there are probably a few ignored films more important than *The Flintstones* and *Timecop*. This Windows CD's interface needs some de-kinking. For example, a glowing button in the summary screen's display of *The Glenn Miller Story* indicates that this movie won an award. Click on the button, and you're sent to Academy Awards for 1954, but you still have to search to find the reference to the movie. Most of the reviews are short and anonymous. Rex Reed writes some, but he's no match for the Ebert-Kael-Maltin combo in Cinema. There's also an odd discrepancy in ratings. Depending on where you look in the CD, *Jurassic Park* is given two, three, and three-and-a-half stars, respectively.

**Mega Movie Guide 3.5** / InfoBusiness / (800) 657-9300 / \$25 est. street price / Reader Service No. 720



## VIDEOHOUND ○○○○

I guess it's a joke that the main screen of VideoHound shows a TV set with a VCR on top that's flashing, "12:00... 12:00... 12:00..." and the virtual VCR's controls are useless to fix it. The real joke, though, is that VideoHound's controls are as confusing as the most elaborate VCR's. This Windows CD has 1,000 film categories, with many quirky topics such as buses, teen angst, and dental mayhem. The controls to search those categories look easy enough, but I often found myself looking at a movie review without knowing how I got there. VideoHound has 60,000 movie titles, second in number only to All-Movie Guide. VideoHound has just three film clips, but it has many photos and a respectable sampling of music tracks. Plus, it has one feature that no other movie CD has: clips of famous movie dogs.

**VideoHound** / Visible Ink Interactive / (800) 776-6265 / \$40 est. street price / Reader Service No. 721



## THIS IS SPINAL TAP ○○○○

*This Is Spinal Tap*, Rob Reiner's tour-de-force spoof of rockumentaries, is not only a classic of its type, but also the only thing of its type—a simultaneous send-up of movies and music done with such a straight face that it might as well be carved on Mount Rushmore. Voyager's CD version of the movie lets you search out the best parts of the film, hear only the music, or find cameo appearances by Billy Crystal, Paul Shaffer, and other stars. A search feature can instantly find any scene in which a particular word is mentioned. Separate sound tracks from the crew and cast give different viewpoints on scenes. I'm not sure *This Is Spinal Tap* really deserves this deluxe treatment, but this is the way to export a movie to a CD.

**This Is Spinal Tap** / The Voyager Company / (800) 446-2001, (212) 431-5199 / \$30 list price / Reader Service No. 722



## EMILY POST'S COMPLETE GUIDE TO WEDDINGS ○○○

If your child—particularly your daughter—wants a big, traditional wedding, you're in for a big, traditional headache. Emily Post's Complete Guide to Weddings might relieve the pain. Instead of

shouting at your family, you can shout at your PC. Most of this Windows CD is forgettable. The video advice from Elizabeth and Peggy Post and the written tips could easily stay in the hard-copy book that accompanies the disc. And you might use the forms for guest lists and other information. The one truly useful feature is a worksheet that adds up your expenditures and compares them with your budget. But that may be something you're better off not knowing until the wedding is over. Bottom line: If organizing things with a computer comes naturally to you, get this disc. If not, stumble through things the old-fashioned way.

**Emily Post's Complete Guide to Weddings** / HarperCollins Interactive / (800) 424-6234, (212) 207-7000 / \$39 est. street price / Reader Service No. 723



## LOGICAL JOURNEY OF THE ZOOMBINIS ○○○○○

This is the coolest educational game I've ever seen. Your goal is to help the Zoombinis, cartoon characters whose ancestry must include Mr. Potato Head, escape Bloat's Island prison. To make a clean getaway, you have to guide the Zoombinis past a troll with choosy taste in pizza, and across bridges and other obstacles that require you to figure out different patterns to get the critters through safely. Kids will never suspect that they're learning math skills such as set theory, graphing, data analysis, logic, and hypothesis formation. Unlike most educational games, which tack a lesson onto a mediocre game, the play in this disc is the lesson. And although it's recommended for ages 8 through 12, like the best of children's games, this one's great fun for adults, too.

**Logical Journey of the Zoombinis** / Broderbund / (800) 521-6263, (415) 382-4700 / \$40 est. street price / Reader Service No. 724



**Fun with Set Theory:** The Zoombinis turn math into child's play.



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\*The average U.S. street price for Pilot® consists with all desktop PIM software and organizer software, docking cradle and accessories. © 1996 U.S. Robotics, Inc. U.S. Robotics and the U.S. Robotics logo are registered trademarks and Pilot and HotSync are trademarks of U.S. Robotics, Inc. and its subsidiaries. All other product names are registered trademarks or trademarks of their respective owners.

Circle 297 on reader service card.



28.8 PC CARD MODEM  
WITH XJACK.

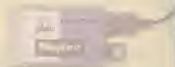
*Cellular Direct Connect.*

*Digital Line Guard.*

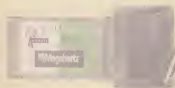
*Home Office Implosion Avoidance.*



PC CARD ETHERNET ADAPTER  
WITH XJACK.



28.8 ETHERNET-MODEM  
WITH XJACK.



ALLPOINTS WIRELESS  
PC CARD.

it is human  
to return from a  
with little soaps

it is human nature  
luggage too big to fit in  
under the seat in

It is human nature  
office will implode if  
for more than

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and shampoos.

to carry on  
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to think the  
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some parts  
nature.

*It is human nature to want to communicate at any time, from anywhere. And in this respect, the business traveler is just a bit more human than most.*

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 4th annual

# notebook torture test



## SYNOPSIS

**BAKE TEST:** *What happens when you cook a notebook?* **112**

**FREEZE TEST:** *Portables aren't just fair-weather friends.* **113**

**DROP TEST:** *Bombs away—is your notebook OK?* **114**

**SPILL TEST:** *Splash! Why coffee and portables don't mix.* **115**

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**USABILITY:** *Notebook trade-offs.* **126**

**FINAL ANALYSIS:** *Pick the perfect portable.* **128**

**Y**ou'd think someone ransacked *PC Computing's* labs, with all the broken parts, spilled sticky stuff, and shattered plastic. But no. It was the aftermath of our notebook torture testing—our annual no-holds-barred, show-your-mettle, boot-up-or-die evaluation to winnow the road warriors from the ruck. This year's systems had to house at least a 90MHz Pentium, and as expected, most of the machines came loaded to the nines. But putting that much technology on the road can be a perilous affair.

Even though portables have made stupendous gains in reliability during the last four years, many still don't suffer life's knocks gladly. What good is your investment





if your system heads south moments before you plan to give a presentation, when you desperately need to retrieve e-mail from the road, or when you have only hours to redraft a proposal in your hotel room?

As this year's tests reveal, however, the little devils can be tougher than you might believe. Even machines laden with large displays, CD-ROM drives, stereo speakers, and multifunction drive bays held up with surprising grace. Just remember: If there's any lesson in this year's tests, it's to keep your notebook dry. Portables that overcame baking, freezing, and falling rarely survived spills. But if sheer toughness is a high priority for you in a notebook computer, these machines are top candidates.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK JOHANN

BY MARTY JEROME





# Turn Up the Heat

There's something tragic about the smell of melting plastic. It evokes an image of dollars and data oozing into oblivion simply because you left your notebook in your car or near an office window one sunny July afternoon.

But as we discovered, it takes more than a little heat wave to cook the notebooks in this roundup. Every machine passed our bake tests, despite punishing heat and humidity.

This is no small achievement. To address thermal concerns, most notebook vendors focus their attention on the Pentium chip itself, a little blast furnace of a CPU. Notebook manufacturers have worked closely with Intel Corporation to prevent the temperature from rising too high inside the cramped confines of the machines—especially notebooks running a 90MHz or faster CPU. The 120MHz and 133MHz Pentium notebooks actually have heat-control technologies built into them.

The result is a delicate thermal balance—which can quickly be

thrown off if your notebook sits in the glare of a window for a while before you boot it. Notebooks can overheat even from prolonged use in a stifling office or residing too close to another heat-generating device for too long.

You may have to worry about some Pentium notebooks overheating, but not these puppies. They can take the heat.



## How We Tested

Recipe for notebook flambé: Boot the machine and place it in an oven set to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Set the humidity precisely to 30 percent. Cook for 60 minutes, then reboot.

What should you expect? If the CPU overheats, you're likely to get erratic system behavior: crashed programs, lost data, and lockup. Electricity-conducting humidity can cause ill-designed circuitry to reboot your PC, shut off backlighting, or spin down the hard drive in the middle of a read or write session.

But none of that happened to the systems in this roundup. So we decided to turn up the heat, as it were.

Step 2: Power down the machine and now raise the temperature to 180 degrees Fahrenheit. Set the humidity to 0 percent. Cook for 60 minutes, then reboot.

On lesser notebooks, the result is permanent LCD discoloration—or complete dysfunction. Screen and port-cover plastics may warp. Keyboard contacts can fail. In fact, the keyboard can melt entirely. Also, these temperatures can flail a battery. But all the systems in this roundup booted cheerfully to life. (Tip: Lithium-ion and nickel-cadmium batteries sustain heat better than nickel-metal hydride batteries.)

## Survivors

- Canon Innova Book 350CD
- Compaq LTE 5100
- Dell Latitude XPi P120ST
- Gateway 2000 Solo S5-120XL
- IBM ThinkPad 760C
- Midwest Micro SoundBook IIp
- NEC Versa 4050C
- Texas Instruments TravelMate 5100
- Toshiba Portégé 610CT
- Twinhead Slimnote 890TX
- WinBook XP5
- Zenith Z-Note GT

## Casualties

None



# Below Zero

It's inevitable. Someday you and your notebook will be stranded at an airport cab stand in 6-degree weather for 40 minutes or longer. Or a 10-minute stop at the office during the winter will somehow drag out to 2 hours while your portable waits in your car in an icy parking lot. These things happen.

In such circumstances, as soon as you power up your frozen machine, heat surges through delicate microelectronics and a nervelike web of copper wires, many of which are no wider than a human hair. Your hard drive's read-write head—calibrated to perch thousandths of an inch above a spinning metal platter—begins bobbing at the surface for data. The liquid crystals in your LCD panel have already turned to molasses.

What are the odds that such fragile metal and plastic components will survive a sudden temperature change? From what we discovered in our freeze tests, the odds are high. Every portable machine in this roundup not only survived a boot-up from a chilly 0 degrees Fahrenheit, but also continued normal, extended operations at a mere 32

degrees—hardly your average office climate.

Of course, you should warm a cold portable to room temperature before turning it on. But if your notebook happens to be one of the systems in this roundup, at least you needn't worry about venturing into nippy territory with it.



## How We Tested

Notebook-toting journalists at the winter Olympics and field commanders who lug portables into icy battlefields know that cold temperatures can cause transitory—or permanent—damage to their systems. Our freeze tests tried to duplicate both kinds of trouble.

In the first testing phase, we lowered the temperature to 32 degrees Fahrenheit and observed changes in normal notebook operations. We expected to find slower screen performance as the liquid crystals in the display panels began to freeze. But the changes in screen response among all the systems we tested were imperceptible.

Any condensation inside a hard-drive casing would have frozen at this temperature, easily causing hard disk-access failure. With enough condensation, a hard disk could stop spinning altogether. But such was not the case.

In the second phase of tests, we lowered the temperature to 0 degrees Fahrenheit with the notebooks turned off. Then we started them. The sudden temperature change might have cracked wires or plastic. It could have prevented the hard drive from booting. In fact, it could have caused a lot of trouble. But it didn't. These notebooks aren't daunted by the cold.

## Survivors

- Canon Innova Book 350CD
- Compaq LTE 5100
- Dell Latitude XPi P120ST
- Gateway 2000 Solo S5-120XL
- IBM ThinkPad 760C
- Midwest Micro SoundBook IIp
- NEC Versa 4050C
- Texas Instruments TravelMate 5100
- Toshiba Portégé 610CT
- Twinhead Slimnote 890TX
- WinBook XP5
- Zenith Data Systems Z-Note GT

## Casualties

None



# Crash Landing

Notebooks bounce. Mind you, it's nothing you'd care to witness, especially if your own dollars bought the box that's vaulting across the floor. But in case you ever wondered, before the bounce there's an unnerving crash with pieces flying everywhere, and then the machine makes a forlorn little hop as it comes to rest.

Clumsy humans are the greatest detriment to notebook longevity. Our drop tests knocked out 3 of 12 machines. Among the survivors, Dell's Latitude XPI P120ST, MidWest Micro's SoundBook IIp, and WinBook's XP5 didn't even suffer a scratch. Texas Instruments' TravelMate 5100 sustained only hinge damage—utterly miraculous.

The other survivors—Compaq's LTE 5100, Gateway's Solo S5-120XL, IBM's ThinkPad 760C, NEC's Versa 4050C, and Zenith's Z-Note GT—suffered varying degrees of screen damage. The Versa 4050C lost most of its backlighting. Banding and discoloration afflicted the four remaining survivors.

The notebooks that succumbed to our drop tests could boot only partway, either because of crashed hard drives or dead power



systems. You could blame it on the angle at which we dropped the systems combined with the placement of components within their chassis. With different internal construction, or dropped at a different angle, they might have survived. A word to the wise: Whatever notebook you buy, don't bounce it off the floor.

## How We Tested

The first 15 or 20 times you drop a notebook, you cringe as it slips from your fingers. Then you become accustomed to the cold, mechanical slaughter.

In the first of the drop tests, our systems—displays closed, power off—took a 29-inch free fall and landed flat on their chassis. Normally, port covers would splinter and fly, and an occasional case would crack. But in our tests, hard drives, floppy drives, and even CD-ROM drives usually emerged unscathed. Ditto for motherboards and keyboards.

Not so for LCDs. If the first drop didn't kill a display, the second—from the same height, but with the case open and dropped so that it hit the floor at an angle—was often fatal.

As notebook repairs go, LCD replacement is the most common—and the most expensive. Portable PC manufacturers have resisted making improvements in protecting their displays from life's knocks because doing so would entail unacceptable increases in size and weight. Several flat-panel technologies on the near horizon should change this.

Better notebook makers engineer key caps and port covers to pop off in case the machine takes a dive so they can be popped right back on, no worse for the wear.

## Survivors

- Compaq LTE 5100
- Dell Latitude XPI P120ST
- Gateway 2000 Solo S5-120XL
- IBM ThinkPad 760C
- MidWest Micro SoundBook IIp
- NEC Versa 4050C
- Texas Instruments TravelMate 5100
- WinBook XP5
- Zenith Z-Note GT

## Casualties

- Canon Innova Book 350CD Hard disk died and screen was damaged.
- Toshiba Portégé 610CT Power disappeared.
- Twinhead Slimnote 890TX Neither screen nor body were harmed, but hard disk died.



# The Big Spill

The most evil thing you can do to a notebook is water it. The machines that could at least boot to an external monitor after baking, freezing, and being hurled around like high-tech hackey sacks died completely when we doused them with an ounce of coffee.

It may seem obvious that when hot java rains on your motherboard, it will go on the fritz and die. We tested to discover how well-protected a notebook's innards were from a splash to the keyboard. After all, accidents happen.

The results of our spill tests prove that not too many accidents can happen to a notebook without it suffering a meltdown. More to the point, only two notebooks survived our spill tests without any trouble: Dell's Latitude XPI P120ST and Compaq's LTE 5100. Two others came through the test under protest: MidWest Micro's SoundBook IIp consistently displayed a "29 stuck key" error message on start-up and beeped at us angrily until Windows 95 loaded, but then it worked fine. Texas Instruments' TravelMate

5100 had similar keyboard problems, but it also booted up.

The coffee actually seemed to revive Compaq's LTE 5100 notebook, which only narrowly survived the drop test. Miraculously, after pitching some coffee in its face, the LTE 5100 has booted consistently and without trouble ever since. We don't recommend you try this with your dead notebook, however.



## How We Tested

Had we used whiskey, water, or yak's milk, the results might have been different. All we know is that pouring coffee into solid-state electronic equipment results in some of the weirdest PC behavior we've ever witnessed.

Since coffee is the most common beverage businesspeople drink near a productivity machine, we poured a mere jigger (1 ounce, with cream and sugar) between the G and H keys, from a height of 3 inches.

Some machines shrugged off the assault entirely until we turned them off and then tried to power them up again the next day. Most notebooks died immediately. Some revived after a day of drying out. All but four suffered some form of permanent dysfunction.

The most common damage? Reports that hard drives could not be found were widespread, showing that the IDE host circuitry had been wiped out. Power supplies were also a typical casualty. Keyboards often lost all or part of their usefulness. Certain keys got stuck, and some pointing devices couldn't be moved (and broke when we tried). The lesson to learn from all of this? Notebooks don't make good drinking buddies.

## Survivors


















- Compaq LTE 5100
- Dell Latitude XPI P120ST
- MidWest Micro SoundBook IIp
- Texas Instruments TravelMate 5100

## Casualties

- Canon Innova Book 350CD Power light came on, but hard disk and display died.
- Gateway 2000 Solo S5-120XL Power light came on, but system didn't boot.
- IBM ThinkPad 760C Hard disk died.
- NEC Versa 4050C Hard disk spun but display died.
- Toshiba Portégé 610CT No power.
- Twinhead Slimnote 890TX Hard disk died.
- WinBook XP5 No power.
- Zenith Z-Note GT No display or power.

# The School of Hard

Think of *PC Computing's* torture testing as a progression of horrors. Bake, freeze, drop, spill: a gamut of notebook miseries sometimes found in the course of business travel. Our torture tests were designed to mimic the worst you'll find on the road. These are not notebook-friendly tests. But they should tell you how your portable will contend with the

| Product                           |  Bake |  Freeze |  Drop |  Spill |  Survivor |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| Compaq LTE 5100                   |  |  |  |   |           | Despite a damaged screen, it booted.                         |
| Dell Latitude XPi P120ST          |  |  |  |   |           | Not a scratch. Who's your guardian angel?                    |
| MidWest Micro SoundBook IIp       |  |  |  |   |           | Despite keyboard error message, everything worked just fine. |
| Texas Instruments TravelMate 5100 |  |  |  |   |           | The coffee took out some keys, but the PC started.           |
| Gateway 2000 Solo S5-120XL        |  |  |  |        |  | Strangely, the spill didn't kill it until the day after.     |
| IBM ThinkPad 760C                 |  |  |  |        |  | A slow death: lifeless after the second day.                 |
| NEC Technologies Versa 4050C      |  |  |  |        |  | The spill 86'd the keyboard and display.                     |
| WinBook XP5                       |  |  |  |        |  | Short-circuited by killer coffee.                            |
| Zenith Data Systems Z-Note GT     |  |  |  |       |  | Hard drive spun but didn't boot, then display died.          |
| Canon Innova Book 350CD           |  |  |     |   |  | Hard drive spun but didn't boot; screen shattered.           |
| Toshiba Portégé 610CT             |  |  |     |   |  | No power, no sign of life.                                   |
| Twinhead Slimnote 890TX           |  |  |     |   |  | Hard drive survived the first drop but not the second.       |

Guide to the Ratings:  Casualty. Notebook failed; repairs required.  Survivor. Notebook passed all tests.



# Knocks

hardest knocks that life on the road can deliver. And since durability is not the only thing on the road warrior's mind when choosing a notebook, we also ran these 12 notebooks through a series of performance and battery tests. Want to find out which system has the muscle, juice, and durability to keep up with you? Take a peek below.

| Performance* | Battery Life (hours:minutes) | Test Summary  |
|--------------|------------------------------|---|
| 24% Faster   | 2:00                         | Could survive a small war, and performance won't disappoint, either, but it would benefit from faster video. Battery life is its weak spot.   |
| 25% Faster   | 3:15                         | A tough, feathery workaholic. You can't beat it up, nor can you beat its battery life, which was the longest in this crowd of portables. Performance isn't bad, either.                                       |
| 20% Faster   | 1:50                         | A decent performer, and it's rugged as old boots. Its 90MHz Pentium held its own against faster processors. Unfortunately, battery life is anemic. We can't wait for the 120MHz version.                      |
| 16% Faster   | 3:20                         | Takes a tumble with grace, and the battery won't surrender. Its performance could be better: Faster video would help, but so would a speedier CPU.  |
| 36% Faster   | 2:25                         | Sizzling performance—there's none faster in this roundup. It can take the knocks of the road as well, but keep it out of the rain. Battery life was mediocre, given its lithium-ion technology.               |
| 2% Faster    | 3:14                         | Doesn't like coffee, and its performance needs a boost. Has a gorgeous 12.1-inch screen on which to view fast graphics. Battery life is excellent.  |
| 2% Faster    | 2:00                         | Keep this machine high and dry. Performance was middling. Battery life was low to middling.   |
| 14% Faster   | 4:15                         | Middle-of-the-road performance, but great battery life and durability. It's not a fan of Java.  |
| 11% Faster   | 1:37                         | Slow to give up the ghost—but it finally did. Other 90MHz portables should envy the Z-Note's excellent performance. But battery life? Ouch.   |
| Baseline     | 2:30                         | Its 100MHz CPU lagged behind every other machine here. This portable doesn't like to be knocked around, either. On the other hand, battery life was OK.   |
| 26% Faster   | 2:50                         | Its performance kept up with portables packing much more CPU muscle. Just don't drop it.  |
| 29% Faster   | 1:50                         | Fast and feature-packed. A faster video accelerator would have pushed it to the front of the class. Battery life needs improvement, and the machine suffers life's knocks about as well as an overripe melon. |

\*PERFORMANCE RATING IS RELATIVE TO CANON'S INNOVA BOOK 350CD BASELINE. BASED ON WINSTONE 96 BENCHMARKS

## Overall Notebook Ratings

| Product   | Price <sup>1</sup> | CPU and Memory (max.)                         | Display <sup>2</sup>         | Weight <sup>3</sup> | Pros   | Cons   | Verdict   |
|---|--------------------|---|------------------------------|---------------------|--|--|---|
|  <b>Dell Latitude XPI P120ST</b><br>(800) 613-3355<br><i>Reader Service No. 826</i> | \$4,199            | 120MHz Pentium, 16MB/810MB (40MB/1.2GB)       | 10.4 inches, 640 by 480      | 7.1 pounds          | Unbeatable battery life, speedy performance, tougher than Ho Chi Minh.                           | No sound, no CD, no multifunction drive bay? How positively retro. | ★★★★★<br>A no-nonsense, bare-bones road warrior.      |
| <b>Compaq LTE 5100</b><br>(800) 345-1518<br><i>Reader Service No. 827</i>   | \$6,128            | 90MHz Pentium, 16MB/1.35GB (72MB/1.35GB)      | 10.4 inches, 800 by 600      | 8.3 pounds          | CO swaps with battery or second hard drive; RAM can total 72MB; torture-test survivor.           | Relatively small display given the machine's capabilities.         | ★★★★★<br>Tough, and loaded with features.             |
| <b>Gateway 2000 Solo S5-120XL</b><br>(800) 846-2000<br><i>Reader Service No. 828</i>  | \$4,599            | 120MHz Pentium, 16MB/1.2GB (40MB/1.2GB)       | 10.4 inches, 800 by 600      | 8.1 pounds          | Zippy doo-dah performance. CO-ROM drive swaps with second floppy.                                | Expensive; CO-ROM drive could be easier to remove.                 | ★★★★★<br>There's none faster.                         |
| <b>IBM ThinkPad 760C</b><br>(800) 772-2227<br><i>Reader Service No. 829</i>   | \$6,184            | 90MHz Pentium, 16MB/720MB (40MB/1.2GB)        | 12.1 inches, 800 by 600      | 7.9 pounds          | Built-in fax-modem-telephony, CO-ROM drive, largest screen, great malleability.                  | Needs more zip.  | ★★★★★<br>Has multimedia written all over it.          |
| <b>MidWest Micro SoundBook IIP</b><br>(800) 537-1471<br><i>Reader Service No. 830</i>   | \$3,495            | 90MHz Pentium, 16MB/720MB (40MB/720MB)        | 10.2 inches, 640 by 480      | 6.9 pounds          | AC adapter can be used as internal battery; survived torture tests.                              | No CD-ROM drive, smallish display.                                 | ★★★★★<br>A durable me-too portable.                   |
| <b>Texas Instruments TravelMate 5100</b><br>(800) 848-3927<br><i>Reader Service No. 831</i>   | \$4,098            | 90MHz Pentium, 16MB/1.2GB (32MB/1.2GB)        | 10.4 inches, 640 by 480      | 7.4 pounds          | Battery has own LEOs for charging status, great battery life, torture-test survivor.             | No CO-ROM drive; design is showing its age.                        | ★★★★★<br>One tough, long-lasting portable.            |
| <b>Toshiba America Portégé 610CT</b><br>(800) 457-7777<br><i>Reader Service No. 832</i>   | \$4,678            | 90MHz Pentium, 16MB/720MB (40MB/720MB)        | 9.5 inches, 640 by 480       | 6.4 pounds          | Smallest and lightest full-featured notebook with decent performance.                            | Pricey; not built for pudgy paws. Battery life could be better.    | ★★★★★<br>Made for traveling, no apologies necessary.  |
| <b>Twinhead Slimnote 890TX</b><br>(800) 995-8946<br><i>Reader Service No. 833</i>   | \$4,199            | 90MHz Pentium, 16MB/1.28GB (64MB/1.28GB)      | 10.4 inches, 800 by 800      | 9 pounds            | Has multifunction drive bay, and you can use floppy and quad-speed CO-ROM drives simultaneously. | Disappointing battery life.  | ★★★★★<br>Solid performer, good design.                |
| <b>Canon Innova Book 350CD</b><br>(800) 848-4123<br><i>Reader Service No. 834</i>   | \$2,976            | 100MHz Cyrix Pentium, 16MB/540MB (32MB/540MB) | 10.4 inches DSTN, 640 by 480 | 8 pounds            | Full multimedia with swappable CD-ROM—for under three grand.                                     | Slowest of the lot.  | ★★★★★<br>Best multimedia for the price.               |
| <b>NEC Technologies Versa 4050C</b><br>(800) 632-4836<br><i>Reader Service No. 835</i>  | \$4,774            | 90MHz Pentium, 16MB/810MB (40MB/1GB)          | 10.4 inches, 800 by 600      | 8.6 pounds          | Pioneered the multifunction drive bay others emulate; gorgeous display.                          | A faster processor would help; CO-ROM drive costs extra.           | ★★★★★<br>Solid, if pricey, multimedia notebook.       |
| <b>WinBook XP5</b><br>(800) 468-2162<br><i>Reader Service No. 836</i>   | \$3,799            | 120MHz Pentium, 16MB/1.3GB (32MB/1.3GB)       | 10.4 inches, 640 by 480      | 7.2 pounds          | Built-in fax modem, battery life that won't let you down.  | No CO-ROM drive, unremarkable feature set.                         | ★★★★★<br>Solid value, if lacking in pizzazz.          |
| <b>Zenith Data Systems Z-Note GT</b><br>(800) 533-0331<br><i>Reader Service No. 837</i>   | \$5,498            | 90MHz Pentium, 16MB/1.3GB (40MB/1.3GB)        | 11.3 inches, 800 by 600      | 8.4 pounds          | Multifunction bay, big beautiful screen, quad-speed CO-ROM drive.                                | Short battery life and lofty price, but good performance.          | ★★★★★<br>Your eyes will thank you; your wallet won't. |

<sup>1</sup> ESTIMATED STREET <sup>2</sup> RAM/HARD DISK SPACE <sup>3</sup> ACTIVE MATRIX UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED <sup>4</sup> WITH AC ADAPTER

★★★★★ Excellent   ★★★ Good   ★★ Acceptable   ★★ Poor   ★ Unacceptable

Continued on page 126

# TOMORROW'S TECHNOLOGY TODAY!



# THE MICRON

Unleashing up to 166MHz of Pentium® processor power, the Micron Millennia blows past established benchmarks into a whole new universe of unbridled computing performance. Continuing to triumphantly sweep the PC industry's most coveted awards, the Micron Millennia line was recently recognized with *PC Magazine's* "Best Products Of 1995" award.

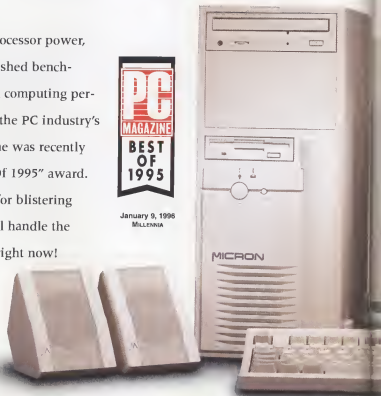


The Millennia series, legendary for blistering speed and outstanding value, will handle the most challenging applications—right now!

So if your style is to work hard and fast, the Micron Millennia is designed just for you.



January 9, 1996  
MILLENNIA



## MILLENNIA P150

- Intel 150MHz Pentium processor
- 256K pipelined burst cache, flash BIOS
- 6X EIDE CD-ROM drive, 3.5" floppy drive
- SoundBlaster™ 16 stereo sound & speakers
- PCI 64-bit video, MPEG, 2MB EDO
- Tool-free mini-tower or desktop
- Microsoft® Mouse, 104-key keyboard
- Microsoft Windows® 95 CD & MS Plus! CD
- 5-year/3-year Micron Power™ warranty\*



- A** • 8MB EDO RAM • 1.0GB EIDE hard drive  
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• Microsoft Works 95 CD

**\$2,199**

Business lease \$75/month

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- With 133MHz Pentium processor.....subtract \$100

## MILLENNIA PLUS P166

- Intel 166MHz Pentium processor
- 256K pipelined burst cache, flash BIOS
- PCI 32-bit Ultra SCSI Fast-20 controller
- 6X SCSI-2 CD-ROM drive, 3.5" floppy drive
- SoundBlaster 16 stereo sound & speakers
- PCI 64-bit video, MPEG, 2MB EDO
- Tool-free mini-tower or desktop
- Microsoft Mouse, 104-key keyboard
- Microsoft Windows 95 CD & MS Plus! CD
- Microsoft Office Pro 95 & Bookshelf 95 CDs
- 5-year/3-year Micron Power™ warranty\*



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Business lease \$105/month

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• 15" Micron 15FGx, .28dp (13.7" display)

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Business lease \$133/month

- C** • 64MB EDO RAM • 4.0GB Fast SCSI-2 hard drive  
• 17" Micron 17FGx, .28dp (15.8" display)

**\$5,499**

Business lease \$173/month

- With 150MHz Pentium processor.....subtract \$200

# MILLENNIA



**M**icron computers are winning critical acclaim for their exceptional quality, record-breaking speeds, dependable performance and outstanding customer service and support. Recognized regularly for technical excellence and for customer service and technical support, Micron computers have been chosen for *PC Magazine's* "Best

Products of 1995" and "Editor's Choice" five times, *PC*

*World's* "Best Buy" over 40 times, *PC Computing's* 1995 MVP award and *Computer Shopper's* "Best Buy of 1995." Micron received the highest

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"Technical Support" and "Future Likelihood of Buying Again."



*"The Millennia is nothing short of the best all-around PC available on the market today."*

—*PC Magazine*, April 25, 1995



December 1995  
MILLENNIA P133

*"...we tested the latest PCs until they begged for mercy and found a no-compromise choice: Micron's Millennia P133."*

—*PC Computing*, December 1995



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ELECTRONICS, INC.



# AWARD-WINNING SYSTEMS

## SERVERS

### POWERSERVER SMP P133

- Intel 133MHz Pentium® processor
- Dual Pentium SMP ZIF sockets
- 512K write-back cache, flash BIOS
- Slots: 5 EISA, 2 PCI, 1 EISA/PCI
- PCI 32-bit Ultra SCSI Fast-20 controller
- 6X SCSI-2 CD-ROM drive, 3.5" floppy drive
- PCI 64-bit video, MPEG, 2MB EDO
- Full-size tower with 10 drive bays
- Microsoft® Mouse, 104-key keyboard
- Microsoft Windows® 95 CD & MS Plus! CD
- 5-year/3-year Micron Power<sup>SM</sup> warranty\*



- A** • 16MB RAM • 1GB SCSI-2 hard drive  
 • 15" Micron 15FGx, .28dp (13.7" display)  
**\$2,999** Business lease \$102/month

- B** • 32MB RAM • 2GB SCSI-2 hard drive  
 • 15" Micron 15FGx, .28dp (13.7" display)  
**\$3,799** Business lease \$129/month

- With second 133MHz Pentium processor.....add \$499
- With Windows NT Workstation 3.51 CD.....add \$99

### POWERSERVER SMP P266

- Dual 133MHz Pentium processors
- 512K write-back cache, flash BIOS
- Slots: 5 EISA, 2 PCI, 1 EISA/PCI
- PCI 32-bit Ultra SCSI Fast-20 controller
- 6X SCSI-2 CD-ROM drive, 3.5" floppy drive
- PCI 64-bit video, MPEG, 2MB EDO
- Full-size tower with 10 drive bays
- Microsoft Mouse, 104-key keyboard
- Microsoft Windows NT Workstation 3.51 CD
- 5-year/3-year Micron Power<sup>SM</sup> warranty\*



- A** • 32MB RAM • 2GB SCSI-2 hard drive  
 • 15" Micron 15FGx, .28dp (13.7" display)  
**\$4,199** Business lease \$143/month

- B** • 64MB RAM • 4GB SCSI-2 hard drive  
 • 17" Micron 17FGx, .26dp (15.8" display)  
**\$5,799** Business lease \$182/month



PowerServer P133 SMP



Exceptional speed, performance and reliability are just a few of the reasons Micron is a technology leader in PC design. From the award-winning PowerStation to the PowerServer SMP P266, Micron offers a complete range of dependable products to suit every need. When you're considering your next PC purchase, consider a Micron PC.

### POWERSTATION P100

- Intel 100MHz Pentium processor
- 6X EIDE CD-ROM drive, 3.5" floppy drive
- SoundBlaster® 16 stereo sound & speakers
- PCI 64-bit video, MPEG, 2MB EDO
- Tool-free mini-tower or desktop
- Microsoft Mouse, 104-key keyboard
- Microsoft Windows 95 CD & MS Plus! CD
- 5-year/3-year Micron Power<sup>SM</sup> warranty\*



- A** • 8MB EDO RAM • 1.0GB EIDE hard drive  
 • 15" Micron 15FGx, .28dp (13.7" display)  
 • Microsoft Works 95 CD  
**\$1,899** Business lease \$65/month

- B** • 16MB EDO RAM • 1.6GB EIDE hard drive  
 • 15" Micron 15FGx, .28dp (13.7" display)  
 • Microsoft Office Pro 95 & Bookshelf 95 CDs  
**\$2,299** Business lease \$78/month

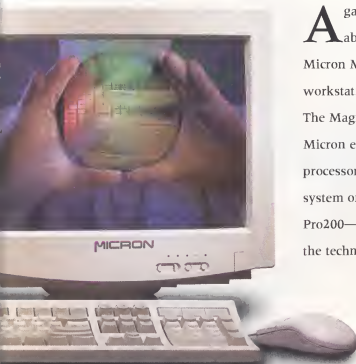
### POWERSTATION LX P75

- Intel 75MHz Pentium processor
- 8MB EDO RAM • 1.0GB EIDE hard drive
- 3.5" floppy drive, flash BIOS
- PCI 64-bit graphics accelerator (1MB)
- 15" Micron 15FGx, .28dp (13.7" display)
- Tool-free mini-tower or desktop
- Microsoft Mouse, 104-key keyboard
- Microsoft Windows 95 & MS Plus!
- Microsoft Works 95
- 5-year/3-year Micron Power<sup>SM</sup> warranty\*



- \$1,599** Business lease \$54/month

# PRO MAGNUM



## MAGNUM PRO150

- Intel 150MHz Pentium Pro processor
- 256K internal cache, flash BIOS
- 6X EIDE CD-ROM drive, 3.5" floppy drive
- SoundBlaster™ 16 stereo sound & speakers
- PCI 64-bit video, MPEG, 2MB EDO
- Tool-free mini-tower or desktop
- Microsoft® Mouse, 104-key keyboard
- Microsoft Windows NT Workstation 3.51 CD
- Microsoft Office Pro 95 & Bookshelf 95 CDs
- 5-year/3-year Micron Power™ warranty\*



**A • 16MB RAM • 1.0GB EIDE hard drive**  
 • 15" Micron 15FGx, .28dp (13.7" display)  
**\$2,999** Business lease \$102/month

**B • 32MB RAM • 1.6GB EIDE hard drive**  
 • 17" Micron 17FGx, .26dp (15.8" display)  
**\$3,799** Business lease \$129/month

- With 180MHz Pentium Pro processor.....add \$200
- With 200MHz Pentium Pro processor.....add \$400



Again, Micron leads the industry by making affordable workstation performance a reality. The new Micron Magnum Plus Pro200 expands the limits of a workstation with the most advanced components available. The Magnum Plus Pro200 system combines superior Micron engineering with Intel's advanced Pentium® Pro processor and Windows® NT for the fastest, most reliable system on the market today. The Micron Magnum Plus Pro200—just what you'd expect from Micron Electronics, the technology leader.

## MAGNUM PLUS PRO200

- Intel 200MHz Pentium Pro processor
- 256K internal cache, flash BIOS
- PCI 32-bit Ultra SCSI Fast-20 controller
- 6X SCSI-2 CD-ROM drive, 3.5" floppy drive
- SoundBlaster 16 stereo sound & speakers
- PCI 64-bit video, MPEG, 2MB EDO
- Tool-free mini-tower or desktop
- Microsoft Mouse, 104-key keyboard
- Microsoft Windows NT Workstation 3.51 CD
- Microsoft Office Pro 95 & Bookshelf 95 CDs
- 5-year/3-year Micron Power warranty\*



**A • 32MB RAM • 2GB Fast SCSI-2 hard drive**  
 • 15" Micron 15FGx, .28dp (13.7" display)  
**\$4,599** Business lease \$156/month

**B • 64MB RAM • 4GB Fast SCSI-2 hard drive**  
 • 17" Micron 17FGx, .26dp (15.8" display)  
**\$6,199** Business lease \$195/month

**C • 128MB RAM • 9GB Fast SCSI-2 hard drive**  
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**\$10,399** Business lease \$320/month

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*Reinvent the meaning of work and play. The Micron Home MPC presents a spectacular multimedia experience complete in a single package. The only limit is your imagination.*



## HOME MPC P100

- Intel 100MHz Pentium® processor
- 8MB EDO RAM • 1.0GB EIDE hard drive
- 6X EIDE CD-ROM drive, 3.5" floppy drive
- SoundBlaster™ 16 stereo sound & speakers
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- Microsoft Phone telephony software
- PCI 64-bit video, MPEG, 2MB EDO
- 15" Micron 15FGx, .28dp (13.7" display)
- Tool-free mini-tower or desktop
- Microsoft® Mouse, 104-key keyboard
- Microsoft Windows® 95 CD & MS Plus! CD
- **Microsoft Home Pak includes:** Works 4.0 for Windows 95; Publisher Deluxe for Windows 95; Encarta® 96; Encarta 96 World Atlas; Music Central® 96; Wine Guide; Arcade 1.0; Scenes-Sports Extremes Collection; Cinemania® 96; Julia Child Home Cooking; Best of Windows Entertainment Pack; Money 4.0 for Windows 95; CD Sampler (includes Fury³ game demo)
- 5-year/3-year Micron Power™ warranty\*



**\$1,999**

Microsoft Home software is the most spectacular collection of educational and entertainment software assembled in a single package. There's something everyone in the family will love from the fabulous new Encarta 96

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## HOMEPro MPC P150

- Intel 150MHz Pentium processor
- 256K pipelined burst cache, flash BIOS
- 16MB EDO RAM • 1.6GB EIDE hard drive
- 6X EIDE CD-ROM drive, 3.5" floppy drive
- SoundBlaster 32 Wavetable soundcard & speakers
- 28.8 fax/modem, speakerphone, voice mail
- Microsoft Phone telephony software
- PCI 64-bit video, MPEG, 2MB EDO
- 17" Micron 17FGx, .26dp (15.8" display)
- Tool-free mini-tower or desktop
- Microsoft Mouse, 104-key keyboard
- Microsoft Windows 95 CD & MS Plus! CD
- Microsoft Office 95 & Bookshelf 95 CDs
- **Microsoft Home Pak includes:** Works 4.0 for Windows 95; Publisher Deluxe for Windows 95; Encarta® 96; Encarta 96 World Atlas; Music Central® 96; Wine Guide; Arcade 1.0; Scenes-Sports Extremes Collection; Cinemania® 96; Julia Child Home Cooking; Best of Windows Entertainment Pack; Money 4.0 for Windows 95; CD Sampler (includes Fury³ game demo)
- 5-year/3-year Micron Power warranty\*



**\$3,199**

- With 133MHz Pentium processor...subtract **\$100**
- With 166MHz Pentium processor...add **\$200**



### \*MICRON POWER™ WARRANTY & SUPPORT

- 5-year limited warranty on microprocessor and main memory
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- 1-year optional on-site service agreement
- 30 days of free Micron-supplied software support
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All sales are subject to Micron's standard limited warranties and terms and conditions of sale. Copies of the limited warranties may be obtained by calling Micron.

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Custom configure your new Micron system with our most popular options.

## MULTIMEDIA OPTIONS

- Creative Labs SoundBlaster™32 Wavetable sound card\*.....\$59
- Creative Labs SoundBlaster 32 Wavetable sound card w/2MB RAM\*.....\$149
- Microsoft® Sidewinder Pro 3D Joystick.....\$59
- Advent AV270 Powered Partners stereo speakers.....\$99
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## STORAGE/MEDIA OPTIONS

- Plexor SixPlex 6X 900kb/s SCSI\*\* internal CD-ROM drive.....\$200  
(upgrade from systems with standard 6X EIDE CD-ROM drive)
- Iomega SCSI\*\* Jaz drive with 1.0GB removable cartridge.....\$399
- Iomega Zip IDE drive with 100MB removable cartridge.....\$99
- Iomega Ditto 800 (400/800MB) Travan Tape back up w/tape.....\$149
- Iomega Ditto 3200 (1.6/3.2GB) Travan Tape back up w/tape.....\$299
- Conner 4/8GB DDS-2 DAT SCSI\*\* Tape back up w/tape.....\$999

## COMMUNICATION OPTIONS

- 28.8bd V.34 internal data/fax modem†.....\$149
- 28.8bd V.34 internal Telephony data/fax modem w/full duplex speakerphone and voice mail.....\$159

## HOME PAK

- Microsoft Home Pak, including: Works 4.0 for Windows 95; Publisher Deluxe for Windows 95; Encarta® 96; Encarta 96 World Atlas; Music: Central® 96; Wine Guide; Arcade 1.0; Scenes-Sports Extremes Collection; Cinemania® 96; Julia Child Home Cooking; Best of Windows Entertainment Pack; Money 4.0 for Windows 95; CD Sampler (including Fury® game demo).....\$149



## NETWORKING OPTIONS

- NE2000 Compatible Ethernet ISA NIC (BNC & RJ-45).....\$49
- 3COM 3C509 Ethernet ISA NIC (BNC, AUI & RJ-45).....\$99
- 3COM 3C595 Fast Etherlink PCI 10/100 NIC (RJ-45 only).....\$159
- SMC ISA TokenCard network card.....\$199

## DISPLAY/VIDEO OPTIONS

- 17" Hitachi SuperScan 1711 (15.9" display) .26dp color monitor\*\*\*.....\$300
- 21" Hitachi SuperScan 2111 (20" display) .26dp color monitor\*\*\*.....\$1200
- Diamond Stealth64 video card w/2MB VRAM†.....\$150
- Diamond Stealth64 video card w/4MB VRAM†.....\$300
- #9 Imagine 128 video card w/4MB VRAM†.....\$500
- #9 Imagine 128 video card w/8MB VRAM†.....\$750

## OTHER OPTIONS

- APC Per7T surge suppressor.....\$39
- APC Pro7T surge suppressor.....\$69
- Microsoft Natural keyboard.....\$79

\*Upgrade from systems with standard SoundBlaster™ 16 sound card  
\*\*Requires SCSI Host Adapter  
\*\*\*Upgrade from systems with standard Micron 17" 17FGx color monitor  
†Upgrade from systems with standard 64-bit 2MB EDO video card  
††V.34 modems includes trial memberships to CompuServe®, Prodigy® and America Online®.

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Circle 107 on reader service card.

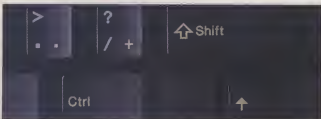


## Usability Report Card

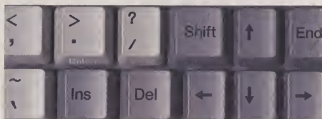
# The Give and Take

Have traveling notebooks become too complicated for their own good? In the quest to deliver the power and features of a desktop system—including multimedia and expansion bays—portable PCs have crept back to the 8-to-9-pound ballpark. Also, efforts to squeeze every bell and whistle imaginable into a portable package have forced some hard usability trade-offs on machines. On the other hand, they have engineered some crafty innovations in usability. The following sample of the best and worst notebook features gives a good indication of where portable technology stands.

### Keyboards



**Life Size:** Few notebook keyboards have the luxurious key spacing and shrewd layout of IBM's ThinkPad 760C. But you can't have it all—there's no wrist rest.



**Close Quarters:** Toshiba painstakingly squeezed its Portégé 610CT keyboard to 90 percent of a normal keyboard's size. The result is a smaller, lighter machine with high portability.

### Pointing Devices



**Two-Horse Race:** Goodbye, trackball—hello, pointing stick and touch pad. The pointing stick's steeper learning curve rewards users with greater accuracy and the ability to point without moving their hands from the keyboard, as shown on Compaq's LTE 5100.



**Slip 'n' Slide:** Easier to learn than a mouse, touch pads (like this one, on MidWest Micro's SoundBook IIp) let you click by tapping on their surface. But accurate dragging and dropping is difficult, and the response varies with temperature and the moisture on your fingertip.

### Multimedia



**CD-a-Go-Go:** Portables that pack CD-ROM drives, like Canon's Innova Book 350CD, are ubiquitous. The trade-off? You really feel the added size and weight when you travel.



**Play It Again:** A true multimedia notebook, such as Zenith's Z-Note GT, requires dual stereo speakers, right? Unfortunately, cramped cases often undermine other wise good audio quality.



# of Today's Portables

## Screens



**Bright Lights:** Yesterday's 10.4-inch display has been superseded by 11.3-inch and 12.1-inch screens like the ThinkPad 760C's.



**Space Saver:** For simple tasks, VGA resolutions are fine. But big screens require big cases. Small screens, like the Portégé 610CT's (9.5 inches), save left.

## Expansion



**Without a Wire:** Infrared adds about \$5 to the cost of a notebook, as with Twinhead's Slimnote 890TX, and makes sharing files with PCs and printers convenient.



### Growing Pains:

Over the last two years, portable PCs have begun polarizing into either desktop-replacement PCs, like Twinhead's Slimnote 890TX (bottom), or traveling PCs, like Toshiba's Portégé 610CT (top).



**Easy Hitch:** Traditional full-size docking stations are giving way to smaller, cheaper port replicators, like this one on Dell's Latitude XPI P120ST.



**Heave-ho!** Full-featured notebooks spent the early 1980s trimming down. With multimedia add-ons, modems, larger storage, and bigger batteries to power all these features, the traveling weight of notebooks like Compaq's LTE 5100 has climbed back to 8 pounds or more.



# Tough Enough?

There are notebooks that travel fewer than 1,000 miles a year. Gingerly transported between home and office or on the occasional business trip, their journeys are as guarded as Fabergé eggs en route to a Museum of Modern Art exhibit.

Unfortunately, most of us have more demanding itineraries. We need a machine that can take the knocks of the road with reasonable impunity—again and again.

Gains in notebook durability have been slow but steady over the last four years. Increased use of integrated circuit chips has allowed motherboards to shrink, thus exposing fewer components to damage. Improvements in shock-mounting better protect a notebook's innards. Advances in hard-drive manufacturing techniques have brought spectacular gains to their reliability. And the list goes on.

But as our torture tests certainly conclude, no notebook is indestructible. Dig deeper into our results, and some surprises emerge. For example, feature-laden multimedia notebooks with audio and video circuitry, delicate CD-ROM drives, and other

bells and whistles are no more prone to injury than stripped-down, lightweight ones. Also, despite all the features and performance gains that continue to be added to the notebook's chassis, the display is still the most vulnerable component—especially to physical jolts. Today's bigger screens add vulnerability by the square inch.

In spite of great concern about the Pentium's overheating within the tight space of a notebook, the machines in this roundup could work the whole afternoon under the blazing sun of a Saudi Arabian desert.

Liquid is your notebook's worst enemy. Make sure your traveling case is waterproof. If you haven't done so, make it a habit to keep beverages away from your system. Slosh a little coffee on your desktop PC keyboard, and you may have to buy a new keyboard. Slosh a little coffee on your notebook keyboard, and you may have to buy a new computer.

*Lab testing performed by* SCOTT NAYLOR, IBRAHIM GUL, and DAISY ZHAO.

## DECISION MAKER

CHOOSE THE RIGHT **NOTEBOOK** FOR YOUR NEEDS

**1** Choose the factor that's most important.

**2** Choose the next most important factor.

**3** What else is important?

**4** For your needs, the best product to buy is...

### Durability

Performance

Price

Dell Latitude XPI P120ST

Technology

Compaq LTE 5100

Usability

Price

Dell Latitude XPI P120ST

Technology

Compaq LTE 5100

### Performance

Durability

Price

Dell Latitude XPI P120ST

Technology

Compaq LTE 5100

Usability

Price

Dell Latitude XPI P120ST

Technology

Gateway 2000 Solo S5-120XL

### Usability

Durability

Upgradability

Dell Latitude XPI P120ST

Special Effects

Compaq LTE 5100

Performance

Upgradability

Dell Latitude XPI P120ST

Special Effects

Twinhead Slimnote 890TX

HER IMAGES  
ARE SHOT ONLY WITH  
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CAPTURED ON THE BEST  
FILM, AND STORED ON  
THE BEST DISC DRIVES.

IT ALL CLICKS  
BEAUTIFULLY.

THE WAY SHE GOES ABOUT HER BUSINESS

IS A TRUE PORTRAIT OF PERFECTION.

AND NOW THAT SHE ARCHIVES ALL HER SHOTS  
DIGITALLY, SHE NEEDS TO KNOW THEY'RE ALWAYS SAFE.

SO SHE INSISTS ON SEAGATE DISC DRIVES.

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**Circle 245 on reader service card.**



# Visual Computing.

Can you see it clearly?

**"A multimedia accelerator...  
breathes new life into  
entertainment & business  
applications."**

## What's hot in visualization today

- 64-Bit Acceleration
- Full-Screen Hardware MPEG Video
- Broadcast Quality Special Effects
- TV on Your PC
- 3D Graphics
- Special 3D Effects
- DirectX Support
- Fast Memory (VRAM, MDRAM)
- PCI-Bus
- Plug and Play Installation
- Flicker-Free Refresh Rates, at least 75 Hz
- Color Depth Switching On-the-fly
- Resolution Switching On-the-fly
- Custom Monitor Settings
- Windows® 95 Support
- Graphical Web Sites
- Award-Winning 3D Games

## Building The Ultimate Visual System

With the recent boom in multimedia, everybody wants brilliant graphics that display instantly. But to get the ultimate visual quality, you need to build a *visual system*. The best tool to boost your computer's visualization is an add-in board called a graphics accelerator that dramatically improves graphics through greater resolution, color and speed. The result is better overall system performance. Applications run faster, and shifts between applications and pages are quicker. Games, CD-ROMs and spread sheets perform better and video playback is more vivid. Within the accelerator category, a range of solutions are available.

### See more, do more

Let's say you have a computer and a 15-inch monitor that offers 800 X 600 resolution. For running applications like Microsoft® Excel, Word, and (when no one is looking) some games, the best strategy is to find a 64-bit accelerator.

### Check the bus

Make sure the accelerator is compatible with your computer's bus; the pathway connecting the new card to the computer's microprocessor. If your computer is a Pentium, it probably uses a PCI bus. A VL-bus is usually found on a 486, while older computers are likely to have an ISA bus. 64-bit accelerators in this category include the Stealth64 Graphics 2000 Series (VLB and PCI), and the SpeedStar 64 Series (ISA), both between \$100 and \$150.

### Get started today without a big expense

To take advantage of applications with video, like multimedia encyclopedias, opt for a

multimedia accelerator with 2MB DRAM, top of improved 2D graphics performance (such as a Stealth64 or SpeedStar), a multimedia accelerator adds full-screen digital video playback, including software MPEG, to a visual system. Be sure a multimedia accelerator supports your operating systems and includes software to customize your desktop. Features like resolution switching on-the-fly. Diamond Multimedia's Stealth64 Video 2

## What Makes A Visual System



Series incorporates all these features, starting price of just \$150 and includes Diamond's InControl Tools desktop productivity software, and supports most operating systems, including Windows 95.

### Select the performance level you need

If you are using more graphically intensive programs or are using a larger monitor with high resolution, such as 1280 X 1024, you should consider a multimedia accelerator with faster memory, such as VRAM, for more visual horsepower. The more video memory the higher color depth, the greater resolution your system can achieve, and the faster screen displays will move. Look at Diamond Stealth64 3000 Series, at a starting price of \$299.

## Video On My PC

One of the hottest computer systems today are those equipped with MPEG playback. MPEG technology compresses and decompresses digital video and audio to deliver full-motion, full-screen digital video playback with realistic clarity, color, resolution, and sound. Diamond offers a video playback board, the Stealth64 Video 2001 Series, which enables these types of capabilities.

### Video adds a new association

Using video to educate and train via computer allows people to learn through visually seeing the lesson, providing detail and intimacy that text alone cannot provide. In the realm of entertainment, the Internet and commercial online services are loaded with video clips of favorite actors, musicians and politicians. With MPEG, those video clips can be viewed at full-screen, full-motion.

### There's MPEG and then there's MPEG!

One point of distinction within MPEG is hardware versus software. MPEG software is more common. But for higher resolution, better quality video applications, with sync, smooth motion and interactivity, as well as maximum playback speed referred to as "frame rate", hardware MPEG is the preferred solution. Because hardware MPEG ensures a consistent rate of playback at 30 frames per second while



delivering remarkably clear playback of video clips, movies, and games, it can offer improved performance on older slower systems, and add the ability to listen to CD-quality MPEG audio.

Diamond's MPEG Video Player 1100 Series daughtercard, at \$129, offers the additional performance of hardware MPEG technology, with the Stealth64 Video 2001 Series multimedia accelerators. This Stealth product utilizes the Scenic/MX2 MPEG decoder from S3, a leading supplier of MPEG solutions.

### I want my PC TV

New TV tuner technology takes the marriage of video and computers even further. This technology allows a broadcast, cable TV, or a VCR signal to be displayed on your monitor, either in a window or full-screen. You can even capture single frame or video clips with this new capability. Imagine having part of your screen dedicated to a stock quote broadcast while working on a PowerPoint presentation. Imagine putting that image in your PowerPoint presentation! You can get that capability with Diamond's DTV 1100 TV tuner, at \$129. It's another upgrade option for the Stealth64 Video 2001 Series of multimedia accelerators.

## Business and Entertainment Graphics Supported by S3's VIRGE



S3 Inc., the leader in multimedia acceleration for PCs, has introduced 3D technology to its complete line of award-winning 2D graphics and video accelerators. Called VIRGE, this single-chip solution delivers for the first time, powerful 3D rendering, fast 2D graphics acceleration, full-screen digital video and optional support for hardware MPEG and TV tuner/video

capture to the mainstream PC market. The flexibility of its design provides for a variety of 3D multimedia accelerator configurations that improve the performance of multiple operating systems as well as business, professional and entertainment applications. Shaping the future of 3D, the S3 VIRGE can be found on the Diamond Stealth 3D 2000 series. Contact S3 through the Internet at <http://www.s3.com>

**"Computing is  
more visual than  
ever before."**

## New Dimensions In 3D

3D technology goes one step beyond standard multimedia accelerators and brings a completely new experience to computing. Multimedia presentations incorporating 3D deliver more impact than 2D graphics. With 3D accelerators, graphics arts, action games, and 3D on the Internet are more realistic. For gamers, 3D signifies a new level of immersion and interactivity. The technology allows for crisper graphics at resolutions as high as 1024 X 768. Better 3D accelerators also support the special effects used in the newest 3D games, including texture mapping and perspective correction. Many are designed specifically for Windows 95, so be sure the one you choose supports the new Microsoft DirectX APIs that game developers will be supporting. Many 3D multimedia accelerators are multi-function, and have features like real-time 3D and 2D photo-realistic graphics, full-screen, full-motion digital video and hardware.

### Diamond offers a family of choices in 3D

Diamond's EDGE® 3D multimedia accelerators incorporate all of these features and come with Sega Saturn compatible control pads\*. Starting at \$249 for 1MB of DRAM, it is bundled with the Sega titles: Virtua Fighter® Remix, Panzer Dragoon® and NASCAR® Racing from Papyrus. Diamond's Stealth 3D multimedia accelerator (available June '96) delivers high-performance 3D animation, fast 2D graphics and digital video playback acceleration, providing advanced performance for multimedia, games and business applications. Starting under \$249 for a 2MB EDO DRAM version, it is bundled with professional software (Asymetrix's 3D/EX™ and Digital Video Producer™) as well as cool games (Interplay's Descent™ II and Sony's Destruction Derby™).

For more information on visual systems contact Diamond at <http://www.diamondmm.com/visad-pcc>



**A passion for performance.**

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Circle 163 on reader service card.

# Communications.

**"The answer for many  
telecommuters and  
home-based businesses  
lies in powerful,  
integrated multimedia  
communications systems."**

## Rules for the road

Don't access the Internet at less than 28,800 bps unless you're ready for a nap.

The higher your transfer rates, the lower your access fees and long distance charges.

The better the compression technology, the faster your transfer rate.

Look for features such as headset support, Caller ID, and message notification by pager, fax or phone.

Remote access to fax and voice messages will help you keep in touch while you're out of the office.

The details count! A solution which includes all the cables you need in a single package saves you time and money.

## Integrated Multimedia Communications — Changing The Way We Work

Communications are not what they used to be. Sophisticated communication tools were the spoils of big business only. Small business struggled using multiple phone lines and a desk cluttered with specialized devices — out of the office meant out of touch. Last year, 9.2 million Americans called themselves telecommuters, and today blank stares go to those without an e-mail address. Advanced communication is here...as long as you know how to get connected.

The answer for many telecommuters and home-based businesses lies in a powerful, integrated communications system. A comprehensive product delivers complete Internet access, file transfer, fax, voice messaging and e-mail, as well as transfer rates to 28.8 Kbps and beyond. Such a solution can also distinguish between incoming fax, data and voice calls on the same line. Conveniences important to small business such as: remote network access, Caller ID, alpha-numeric LCD display, and pager notification of

messages are also available. Now anyone can add a full-spectrum digital switchboard to their computer. Big business no longer has the communication advantage.

The development of modems that handle voicemail and fax means cutting the costs associated with additional equipment, personnel and phone lines.

Higher speeds, the cost of long distance calls, Internet access fees and the spent online drop significantly.

Being wired to the broad base of the World Wide Web

provides extraordinary information collection capabilities as well as exceptional promotional opportunities for small

business. For example, an interactive magazine combining text, graphics, sound and video can be produced at a reasonable price. The Supra Communications Division of Diamond Multimedia, Inc. offers these capabilities in the SupraSonic 288V, a fully integrated communications solution priced as low as \$299.



## State-Of-The-Art Integrated Modem



**E-mail  
Voicemail  
Fax  
File Transfer  
Internet**





## What to do on the Internet

Promote your business

Look for a job

Visit new countries

Play video games

Send mail around the world

Visit the Smithsonian

Chat with friends in Europe

Browse libraries

Listen to new music

Read encyclopedias online

Publish your artwork or writing

Read product reviews

**"What does it take to surf the Net, send and receive e-mail, and download that Web page everyone is talking about?"**

### Jumping On The Internet — Without Falling

The Internet is leading the remote connectivity charge. But with all the buzz about the Internet, many people are still relatively confused about what it all means and how to take advantage of it properly. Although the Internet is growing rapidly due to increasing business demand, an estimated 90% of American homes are yet to be connected. Very few discussions about the hottest Web

designed to work together seamlessly and are supported by an established leader in communications. To reduce Internet access fees and prevent watching your screen download a single file for 15 minutes, choose a state-of-the-art, high-speed, 28.8 Kbps modem. To take full advantage of the speed, you'll also want to

**"The Internet is leading the connectivity charge."**

is, who is the best Internet provider, and how to get online without headaches fill the business press as well as popular news magazines and even Ladies Home Journal. What does it take to surf the Net, send and receive e-mail, and download that Web page everyone is talking about? One of the simplest solutions is to get a comprehensive Internet kit that offers everything you need to get wired quickly and painlessly. Now you don't have to be a technician to enjoy this new realm of communication!

connect with an Internet service provider that can be accessed at 28.8 Kbps (not all of them can). Your provider should also have local access numbers in your area (so you're not paying a long distance fee each time you call), and enough ports to handle a large number of customers (so you don't get a busy signal when you want access). You'll also want to ensure that your kit comes with one integrated software program that encompasses all the primary services the Internet offers: e-mail, the World Wide Web, Gopher, USENET and FTP. Finally, while it will be simple to hop on the Internet with a good kit, make sure the included documentation and manuals specifically address all the items in the kit. All the features required for easy Internet access are available in the Supra Simple Internet 288. This comprehensive solution, over a \$300 value, is priced well under \$200 and includes a CD-ROM tutorial as well as an Internet Directory.

But buyer beware. There are many kits available that offer partial or non-integrated solutions. For example, some kits contain software only. Others provide a lower speed 14.4 Kbps modem along with off-the-shelf software (or shareware) and an answer book — none of which is specifically integrated to work together. A complete solution will have you surfing quickly and simply because the modem, software, Internet service provider and manuals are



### The SupraSonic 288V+

If you're a professional or serious user, you'll want the performance and messaging capabilities of the SupraSonic 288V+, a fax/voice/data modem. Small or home-based businesses will find extremely useful features like: a headset, an intuitive LCD display, Caller ID, fax-on-demand, remote access to faxes and voicemail, all necessary cables, and a friendly user-familiar interface.



### Supra Simple Internet 288

Integration. That's the key to finding the right Internet kit. Supra Simple Internet makes getting on the Internet easy with a 28.8 Kbps modem, Supra Mosaic software, customized manuals, a CD-ROM tutorial, fax software and all cables.



### SupraExpress 288i PnP

This economical solution offers dependable 28.8 Kbps communications and the ease of plug-and-play installation. Configuration is automatic whether you're running Windows 3.1 or Windows 95. Complete Windows solution for fax, Internet and file transfer.

For more information on communications contact Supra at <http://www.supra.com/sonic-ccc>



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# Plug the Gaps in Windows Ten Things Microsoft Left Out 95

Let's not kid ourselves: Windows 95 isn't perfect. For every plug-and-play plus, there's also a missing virus shield or substandard file manager.

After more than a year of living with Windows 95, we found ten chinks in its armor. The interface may be easy to pick up, but it's still not as efficient as it could be. The disk tools don't go far enough. Memory management still proves to be a problem. And the applets for font management, disk compression, program

uninstalling, and file transfers are still raw. Also, Microsoft dropped some features that previous DOS versions wore with pride, including a system-maintenance scheduler.

But a few missing features don't constitute a reason to avoid Windows 95. Sure, we found holes. But we also found the right products to plug them up with.

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BY BILL FIELDS



## Gap 1: Program Launchers

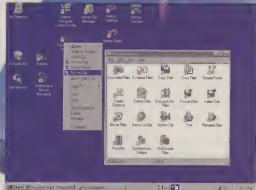
While the Rolling Stones song "Start Me Up" made for a decent ad, many of us can't help feeling that the money Microsoft spent for the rights to use it would have been better spent going the extra mile on the operating system's interface. But that didn't happen, so a slew of interface enhancements came to the rescue.

Dashboard 95 from Starfish Software is the father of all program launchers. Its custom launching tools, clocks, calendars, system monitors, and even card games are crammed cleverly into a tiny space onscreen.

If you prefer more interface enhancements and want them hidden everywhere, Symantec's Norton Navigator for Windows 95 is the package of choice. In our testing, the program beat out MicroHelp's PowerDesk, WitchDesk's WitchDesk for Windows 95, and Plannet Crafter's Plug-In

for Windows 2.6. Navigator's most obvious enhancement—multiple desktops—shows up on the Taskbar: On the right end of the Taskbar, thumbnails let you switch between desktops. Click on one, and you get a sample alternative desktop with all the special options on it. Before long you'll be making project-specific desktops faster than you make folders.

Norton Navigator's Control Center (click on the Taskbar's switch icon) is the key to customizing your Windows 95 interface. You decide how many files you see in your Start/Documents menu. You can



### Norton Navigator 95:

Besides a pretty face, you get extra utilities through right-click options.

also set a history list for your Start/Run menu, so it acts more like the Documents menu (which makes a lot more sense than the Windows default).

Overall, Norton Navigator shines for its sheer volume of enhancements.

## Gap 2: File Management

In the long lead-up to the Windows 95 launch, Microsoft described Explorer as "File Manager on steroids." This lends new weight to the "Just Say No" campaign. Although Explorer has many benefits, it's missing many

more. It doesn't show icons of all the drives on your system the way File Manager did (copying files was so much easier), nor does it let you tile Windows. And it doesn't encrypt files.

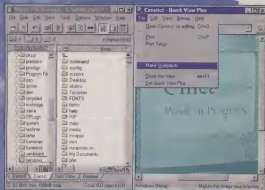
Explorer's kissing cousin, Inso's Quick View Plus, is pretty limited, too. Sure, it opens the basic file formats, but it doesn't print, open files for editing in their associated apps, or let you view OLE objects embedded in documents.

We looked at many products, including Canyon Software's Drag and File for Windows 95 and Pacific Gold Coast's Turbo Browser for Windows 95. What we discovered was that no one program can fill all the file-management gaps. But as a tag-team combo, Symantec's Norton Navigator

and Inso's Quick View Plus not only meet these requirements, they exceed them. While installing Quick View Plus, you have the option of associating it with Netscape's Navigator Web browser. If you do, it handles an almost absurd number of document types, closely mimics formatting, prints documents, and opens multiple files (from right-click menus, if you choose).

Norton Navigator, on the other hand, pulls out all the stops. In addition to handling all the shortcomings we listed above, it treats ZIP files like regular Windows 95 folders, lets you create self-extracting ZIP files by simply renaming them with an EXE extension, and integrates FTP sites on the Internet into File Manager as though they were network drives.

Download a free trial version of Quick View Plus from [www.inso.com/](http://www.inso.com/). You can also find a link to it on PC Computing's Web site at [www.pccomputing.com](http://www.pccomputing.com).



**Norton Navigator 95 and Quick View Plus:** Conquer file management with this tag team.

## Gap 3: Disk Diagnostics

You can't complain about Windows 95's Scandisk, Defrag, and its two little resource monitors (assuming you can find them, that is). These built-in utilities fix lost clusters and cross-linked files, optimize your hard disk, and tell you how your system is performing. But let's face it, none of them is likely to be voted queen at the Utilities Ball.

That accolade falls to Symantec's Norton Utilities for Windows 95. Since the earliest versions of DOS, this collection of utilities has filled enormous gaps in various operating systems. Norton Utilities gave Microsoft the idea for some features that became standard in its operating systems; three main examples are the file-undelete option, the disk defragger, and the disk-information tools. Of course, all those features are also found in Windows 95, Microsoft's

Plus, Quarterdeck's WinProbe 4, TouchStone's WinCheckIt 4.0, and CyberMedia's First Aid 95. But Norton Utilities for Windows 95 has better ones—and it does a whole lot more than Windows 95.

The speed of Norton Speed Disk puts Windows 95's Defrag to shame. The Norton Image and Rescue tools save crucial system information and help restore it in case of disaster. To avert calamities altogether, Norton Disk Doctor not only performs a series of tests on your hard disk that make Windows' own Scandisk look like a quack, but also produces in-depth and accurate reports.

Oh, and when you fill up your hard disk, Norton Space Wizard looks for redundant space hogs in all—and we do



**Norton Utilities 95:** Disk Doctor is part of the winning combo for keeping tabs on your system.

mean—all—the right places, then deletes or compresses whichever files you choose for the treatment.

That's how you treat a hard disk.

## Gap 4: Memory Management

Remember reeling with laughter at Windows 95's minimum memory requirement (4MB) and the recommended amount (8MB)? Remember how the joke froze when you found out that unless you had 16MB, it really did drag on your PC? OK, hold that thought.

Another gag going around was that you could run all those DOS games under Windows 95. Sure enough, Doom worked on the first try. But a few apps still needed more than 600K of conventional memory, and—surprise, surprise—those Windows 95 command-line sessions crammed all their virtual DOS machinery right where the games needed it most.

There are tons of memory utilities on the market, including

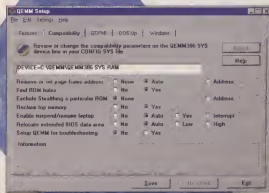
95's shortcomings best. With QEMM's Stealth technology, you can shuffle vital chunks of DOS code in your Windows 95 command-line sessions to free up more conventional RAM for those CD-ROM titles that think they're still running

under DOS. We didn't get the entire 634K of free conventional memory that Quarterdeck claims is possible, but we did reclaim a crucial 21K into upper and high memory to reach the 600K mark.

And to increase apparent memory for those new 32-bit apps, the QEMM bundle comes with MagnaRAM 2.0,

the first functioning RAM compressor for Windows 95. Our test-running machine, Compaq's Deskpro 33MHz 486 with 8MB of RAM, is a good litmus for this class of product. We could have loaded a couple more big applications while running MagnaRAM on this platform. Sure, it took a little longer to open

programs (because MagnaRAM was compressing its code into RAM), but switching between applications was much faster.



### QEMM 8:

Squeeze the most out of your memory under Windows 95 with QEMM's Stealth technology.

## Gap 5: System Maintenance

Power users don't like to expend much energy on mundane tasks like running a quick Scandisk session or defragging a hard drive. Routine maintenance tasks like those are best programmed into your system's schedule and taken care of automatically.

But you can't do that kind of system maintenance with Windows 95 alone. Scheduling times to run programs is a job for add-in utilities. Microsoft didn't ignore scheduling completely, of course. System maintenance scheduling is part of what the System Agent component of Microsoft's Plus pack handles. System Agent gets installed by default and is programmed to handle a few routine tasks like disk scanning and defragmenting.

System Agent works well as a basic solution, but it isn't your only option. If you favor Starfish Software's Dashboard 95 as a program-launching

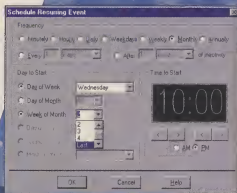
interface, you can also make use of its event-scheduling option.

The Cadillac of system maintenance schedulers, however, is Metz Software's Metz Scheduler, which includes options that put other similar programs to shame. You can schedule events to occur annually, monthly, weekly, daily, hourly, or even every minute. Alternatively, you can have Metz Scheduler set wheels in motion after a pre-determined period of inactivity under Windows 95. This level of control over times and dates is the software's key strength. And despite its almost excessive number of options, Metz Scheduler also boasts muster in usability.

Another good thing about Metz

### Metz Scheduler:

Schedule your regular system maintenance right down to the minute.



Scheduler is that you can try it free for 45 days.

Download it from [www.pccomputing.com](http://www.pccomputing.com) and pay only \$29 if you like it. (You can also find a link to it on PC Computing's Web site at [www.pccomputing.com](http://www.pccomputing.com).)

## Gap 6: Font Management

Remember how dangerous it was to install a CD-ROM chock-full of snazzy typefaces under Windows 3.x? Even the most tanked-up PCs, the ones that were supposed to be the expansion

slots with memory, took eons to boot up as Windows brought up font after font for inspection *before* it provided you with even a glimpse of the Program Manager.

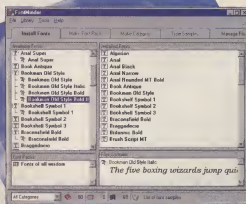
This time around, Microsoft took the sluggishness out of font-loading. Windows 95 with 35 fonts behaves no differently from Windows 95 with 3,500 fonts—until you open the Control Panel's Font folder, that is.

In a laudable attempt at usability, Microsoft turned almost anything it could into a folder, and made all of the folders operate in a similar way. This approach works for the directory structure in Microsoft Explorer, the Control Panel's applets, and the

bookmarks in Internet Explorer—which are just folders full of shortcuts. However, this scheme doesn't work for fonts. A much more sensible arrangement comes from Ares's FontMinder 3.0.4, which has virtually no competition in its field.

With Windows 95's Fonts folder, you can add, delete, and sort fonts according to descriptions such as serif, sans serif, and script. You can do that with FontMinder, too. But FontMinder also lets you preview fonts in a subwindow and sort them into font packs to load and unload for special projects, all in one tab-oriented window. In a second window you can check out each font's full character set and technical details such as weight, kerning pairs, file name, and folder location.

This one-disk utility handles fonts like a hot-lead-slingin' pro, and it behaves like a good little Windows app as well. A utility like FontMinder just has to be your type.



**FontMinder 3.0.4:** Sort, preview, load, and unload fonts to your heart's content with Ares's FontMinder.





## Gap 9: Virus Protection

Unlabeled your system has actually been struck by viruses, you're likely to have one of two responses to the threat of them: dread or denial. Once you've had a virus on your system, the responses shake down to a common denominator—namely, irritation. And once you've graduated from the last version of DOS (which had a built-in virus scanner and shield) to Windows 95 (which doesn't), it won't always be the virogens that bear the brunt of your irritation.

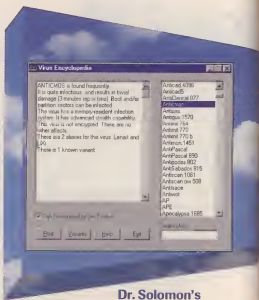
Third-party Windows 95 virus apps abound, such as TouchStone's PC-cillin 95, Symantec's Norton AntiVirus for Windows 95, and IBM's AntiVirus 2.4. But McAfee's VirusScan for Windows 95 and S&S International's Dr. Solomon's Anti-Virus Toolkit for Windows 95 stood out in our testing.

VirusScan takes up less than 2MB on your hard disk, and just shy of

900K to download. It's available on the Internet (mcafee.com/) or as a link on *PC Computing's* Web site (www.pcomputing.com).

Dr. Solomon's Anti-Virus Toolkit (CompuServe: GO DRSOLOMON) provides a few more options, including scanning of zipped files and an encyclopedia of viruses that gives you a first-rate education in protecting your system.

We highly recommend either of these programs, giving a slightly stronger push toward the pricier Dr. Solomon due to its superior tutorial. A word of warning: Don't try to run any virus scanner at the same time you run a system utility—especially if it's from the Microsoft's Plus or Symantec's Norton Utilities. In fact, quit System Agent



**Dr. Solomon's Anti-Virus Toolkit 95: No virus is safe from the doctor with this utility.**

and Norton Utilities before you start a virus scan. The two types of utilities vie for control of your system—a clash of the titans that can easily freeze Windows 95 in its tracks.

## Gap 10: File Transfer

With My Briefcase, dial-up networking, and newly secure file sharing among user-administered local workgroups, Windows 95 seems to have file sharing all sewn up—until you actually try to do it. Where's the ease of use? Where's the infrared hookup? Where's the access to other versions of Windows? And

where's the darn cable for connecting it to your laptop?

You don't get any of that with Windows 95. But you get all that and more with Traveling Software's LapLink for Windows 95. When we matched it up against Symantec's pcAnywhere32 in our labs, we found that LapLink is the product we'd want with us on the road. Using Windows 95's modem, port, IPX, and TCP/IP drivers, LapLink packs all kinds of remote-file and system access into a single program.

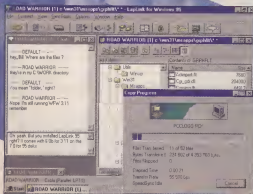
Need to sync up work files between your laptop and desktop system? Everything you need is right there—down to parallel and null-modem serial cables. LapLink pumps files across the wire lickety-split and lets

you do all sorts of file-management tasks on both hard disks right from the keyboard. And Traveling Software's SmartSync technique (like Windows 95's Briefcase) ensures that you don't overwrite newer files as you sync up folders on both systems.

But throwing files across a parallel cable is the smallest part of the story. LapLink is also a remote-access and remote-control program with a chat feature, so with one phone connection you can hold typed conversations with whoever's at the PC you're connected to. And you can access a network from the road, using dial-up or a PPP-compliant remote-access server. Having Internet access to your LAN or other host system means you can hook up remotely at local dial-up connection costs.

Windows 95 includes rudimentary features for transferring files between systems. But LapLink adds an easy-to-use interface and support for Windows 3.1 systems, and throws in the connection cable besides.

**LapLink for Windows 95:** This remote-control program gives road warriors effortless network access.



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# All the Right Pieces

For each of the obvious holes in Windows 95, there's a fix. But the trend in utilities is moving away from single solutions. Gearing up for a fully functioning Windows 95 is an exercise in mixing and matching.

Having uncovered the holes in Windows 95, we set out looking for tools to plug every one. But for each dedicated, single-function solution we discovered, we also found a utility that addressed a fistful of issues in a creative way.

The one-product solutions were for combating viruses, uninstalling applications, and managing fonts. Although you might choose Dr. Solomon's Anti-Virus Toolkit or McAfee's VirusScan according to your needs, products like these don't help fill any other gaps in Windows 95.

However, other fixes spanned multiple problems. DriveSpace 3 in Microsoft's Plus, for example, gives you more than premium disk compression. It also takes care of your system maintenance, because Plus throws in System Agent as part of the deal. Likewise, if you want a multiple-desktop interface that makes smart use of the Taskbar as a desktop switcher, your obvious choice is Symantec's Norton Navigator. Navigator solves the majority of Explorer's shortcomings as a file manager, too.

In some cases you'll want multiple products to handle Windows 95's weaknesses. In most ways, Norton Navigator is a solution to your file-management needs—but it doesn't do anything to expand Windows 95's roster of file viewers. For that, you have to turn to Quick View Plus, which coincidentally offers support for Navigator as one of its installation options.

But although a pieced-together collection of utilities from multiple vendors addresses all of your specific needs, it does expose you to problems you wouldn't encounter with a single-vendor solution. For example, if you're running a system agent such as the kind in Microsoft's Plus pack or Symantec's Norton Utilities, you can expect trouble from low-level, invasive utilities such as virus scanners that make it their business to probe the areas where the system agent is looking. But as we discovered in our tests, these incompatibilities are typically covered in the programs' documentation and are easily remedied. And if it means plugging those Windows gaps, isn't that worth a little extra effort?

*BILL FIELDS is a freelance writer who has been filling the gaps in Windows 95 and other operating systems for over ten years. Lab testing by LULU BEZUAYEHU.*

## RESOURCE GUIDE

### WINDOWS 95 UTILITIES TO CREATE THE IDEAL OPERATING SYSTEM

**AntiVirus 2.4** / IBM / (800) 426-2255 / \$49 est. street price / Reader Service No. 786

**CleanSweep 95** / Quarterdeck Corp. / (800) 683-6696 / \$30 est. street price, \$20 for universal upgrade / Reader Service No. 781

**Dashboard 95** / Starfish Software / (800) 765-7839 / \$50 est. street price / Reader Service No. 782

**Drag and File for Windows 95** / Canyon Software / (800) 280-3891 / \$35 est. street price / Reader Service No. 783

**Dr. Solomon's Anti-Virus Toolkit for Windows 95** / S&S International / (800) 701-9648 / \$50 est. street price / Reader Service No. 784

**First Aid 95** / CyberMedia / (800) 721-7824 / \$40 est. street price / Reader Service No. 785

**FontMinder 3.0.4** / Ares Software Corp. / (800) 783-2737 / \$60 est. street price / Reader Service No. 786

**LapLink for Windows 95** / Traveling Software / (800) 343-8080 / \$130 est. street price / Reader Service No. 787

**MagnaRAM 2** / Quarterdeck Corp. / (800) 683-6696 / \$40 est. street price / Reader Service No. 788

**Max 8** / Qulitas Corp. / (800) 733-1377 / \$70 est. street price / Reader Service No. 789

**Metz Scheduler** / Metz Software / (800) 447-1712 / \$29 est. street price / Reader Service No. 790

**Norton AntiVirus for Windows 95** / Symantec Corp. / (800) 441-7234 / \$78 est. street price / Reader Service No. 791

**Norton Navigator for Windows 95** / Symantec Corp. / (800) 441-7234 / \$99 est. street price / Reader Service No. 792

**Norton Utilities for Windows 95** / Symantec Corp. / (800) 441-7234 / \$119 est. street price, \$59 for upgrade / Reader Service No. 793

**pcAnywhere32** / Symantec Corp. / (800) 441-7234 / \$149 est. street price / Reader Service No. 794

**PC-cillin 95** / TouchStone Software / (800) 531-0450 / \$50 est. street price / Reader Service No. 795

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**Plus for Windows 95** / Microsoft / (800) 426-9400 / \$40 est. street price / Reader Service No. 797

**PowerDesk / MicroHelp** / (800) 777-3322 / \$50 est. street price / Reader Service No. 798

**QEMM 8** / Quarterdeck Corp. / (800) 683-6696 / \$70 est. street price, \$30 for upgrade / Reader Service No. 799

**Quick View Plus** / Inso Corp. / (800) 333-1395 / \$49 est. street price / Reader Service No. 800

**Remove-It 3.0** / Vertisoft / (800) 466-5876 / \$35 est. street price / Reader Service No. 801

**Turbo Browser for Windows 95** / Pacific Gold Coast / (800) 732-3002 / \$50 est. street price / Reader Service No. 802

**Uninstaller 3.0** / MicroHelp / (800) 777-3322 / \$40 est. street price / Reader Service No. 803

**VirusScan for Windows 95** / McAfee Associates / (800) 866-6585 / \$45 est. street price / Reader Service No. 804

**WinCheckIt 4.0** / TouchStone Software / (800) 531-0450 / \$50 est. street price / Reader Service No. 805

**WinProbe4** / Quarterdeck Corp. / (800) 683-6696 / \$50 est. street price / Reader Service No. 806

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# Waiting for Windows 97

Last August, as Microsoft started up the Windows 95 hype machine and cranked it to ear-splitting volume, something extraordinary happened. Computer industry analysts, normally a cranky and contrarian bunch, came together in a stunning show of unanimity. Every analyst we talked to offered the same advice: Corporate computer buyers should avoid the Windows 95 stampede until early 1996, when Microsoft will be forced to release the inevitable bug-fix upgrade.

Gambling on Windows 96 seemed like a sure thing even as late as December; after all, every operating system ever released has suffered from the dreaded point-zero curse. Instead, it turned out to be a sucker bet. Late in January Microsoft made it official: There won't be a Windows 96—or a 95.1, either—and the only bug fixes will be contained in a handful of patches posted on Microsoft's Web site ([www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)) and available as a CD-ROM "service pack."

While Microsoft's developers work on the next major release, expect a steady stream of Windows add-ons this year and next, most of them designed to

extend Windows 95's hooks into the Internet and all destined to appear in Windows 97. Beta testing began in February on a new version of Windows NT, scheduled for summer release and incorporating the Windows 95 interface. And the rumor mill continues to churn: Beta testing for Windows 97 won't begin until fall or later, but early this year the first version of Windows 97—extremely unauthorized, and very ragged—popped up on the Internet.

**One Piece at a Time** For sheer bulk, the Windows 95 service-pack CD includes the entire Windows Driver Library, with updated drivers for video adapters, printers, and other hardware devices that weren't supported last summer. The rest of the service pack can be divided into three categories:

- **New stuff.** The most visible addition is Internet Explorer 2.0, the latest release of Microsoft's Web browser. Two other Internet add-ons are upgrades to components that first appeared on the Plus CD: an improved setup wizard for configuring dial-up Internet connections, plus a friendlier dial-up scripting tool.

There's also a driver that allows wireless communication between portable PCs and desktop systems equipped with infrared ports.

- **Bug fixes.** An updated version of the 32-bit Windows 95 OLE libraries fixes a problem with Microsoft's Office applications that caused stray data to be inserted along with OLE objects. Encryption for the Windows 95 password cache is beefed up, and a revised file- and printer-sharing service plugs a security hole that Internet users might encounter.

- **Network updates.** Businesses that are Novell-centric will welcome a Microsoft-written network service that lets Windows 95 machines connect with NetWare 4.x servers and use NetWare Directory Services (NDS). A corresponding update to the Windows 95 shell enables NDS browsing and fixes an obscure bug that can result in data loss when copying files on

## Windows 97 vs. Windows NT

| Features          | Windows 97   | Windows NT 4.0   |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Plug and Play     | The switch to NT-style drivers could cause hardware havoc. Older devices may get an "unsupported" label, but compatibility will still be the goal.   | NT's security layers are the sworn enemy of the most ill-behaved hardware devices. Plug and Play features will migrate slowly into NT.       |
| Multimedia        | Microsoft is determined to make this the ultimate game platform. High-performance DirectX sound and video drivers will be built into Windows 97.     | A handful of the improved DirectX sound and video drivers will appear in NT, making Windows 95 games an option even in uptight corporations. |
| Microsoft Network | The effort to transform Microsoft Network from an America Online clone to the world's largest Internet service provider will continue at full speed. | Want Internet access via Microsoft Network? You won't find it in this year's NT upgrade package, though it may be available by year-end.     |
| Mobile Computing  | Plug and Play pays off with on-the-fly reconfigurations that adapt instantly to new monitor sizes, network connections, and the like.                | The hassle continues: Plug and Play, you'll need to shut down and restart the notebook each time you hook up to a docking station.           |

NetWare servers. For Big Blue shops, there's a new Data Link Control (DLC) protocol stack that allows Windows 95 machines to talk with IBM mainframes and AS/400s.

**New for 96?** Not every new Windows 95 component made it into the first service pack, however. One notable extra is now available for download from a variety of online sources, including *PC Computing's* Web site ([www.pccomputing.com](http://www.pccomputing.com)).

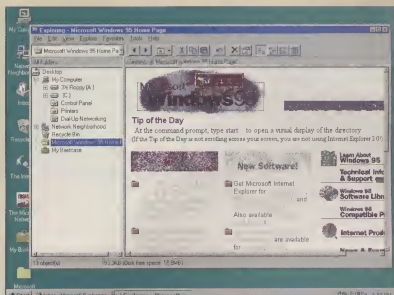
Wang Laboratories and Microsoft collaborated on this new library of imaging software that hooks into Windows 95 as an OLE component. With Wang's custom OLE controls, users of image-flow and document-imaging applications can scan paper documents and process faxes received through a fax modem, then store, view, and manage them as electronic images. The first incarnation of the Wang software beefs up the Windows 95 fax service for Microsoft's Exchange, adding annotation and a more robust viewing engine.

Also new for 1996: an assortment of improved sound and video drivers designed to pump up Windows 95 game titles. Don't look online for the DirectX drivers, though—DirectDraw, DirectSound, and the other components will be shipped with new games (like *Doom* for Windows 95) for installation as needed.

**On Deck: the Internet and NT** With the next major Windows release scheduled for next year, does that mean there'll be no Windows news in 1996? Hardly. Bill Gates seems to have taken a lesson from the Bill Clinton School of Motivation: "It's the Internet, stupid!" is the motto around Microsoft's Redmond campus, and that focus is reflected in the list of updates expected to appear this year.

Internet Explorer 3.0 is the most eagerly awaited of the bunch. Expect to see support for Sun's Java programming language, as well as the ability to handle frames and other HTML extensions that debuted in Netscape's Navigator 2.0. But while Navigator focuses on encouraging third parties to develop plug-in applets, Microsoft is pinning Internet Explorer's future on Visual Basic and DocObjects-embedded OLE files that launch an associated application when double-clicked.

Meanwhile, a quiet update to Windows NT may have more of an impact on business users. Around Microsoft, the update is known informally as the Shell Update Release, although it will likely be called Windows NT 4.0 when it hits the streets this summer. This new version, whose interface looks nearly identical to that of Windows 95, overcomes one of the major objections corporations expressed to upgrading from Windows 3.1. In theory, despite the enormous architectural differences between the two operating systems, users of Windows 95 and NT can sit in a single training class.



**Web View:** Internet Explorer 3.0 should be ready this year, perhaps in time for the midyear release of Windows NT 4.0. Next year, look for this Web browser to integrate tightly with Microsoft's Windows Explorer, offering Web views of HTML pages and files on your hard drive.

**Wait Till Next Year?** Does this parallel development track mean that Windows 95 and Windows NT are destined to converge in a single operating system? Maybe, but it won't happen in 1997. Although Windows 97 and the next major upgrade of Windows NT are set to share more code than ever before, there will still be a need for two distinct operating systems. Early this year, an extremely rough "Beta 999" of Windows 97 escaped Microsoft's development labs and snuck into the real world. Based on our sneak peek at that software, here's what we predict you'll see next year:

- **A new hybrid of Internet Explorer and Windows Explorer.** This major interface change will surface in both operating systems, possibly even this year. The new universal browser will replace the confusing hierarchical structure of drives and folders with the page-oriented metaphor in Web browsers; the idea is to let you browse files on local disks and network servers by clicking on links on a page. Just as with your Web browser, you'll be able to save favorite views and switch between views with the click of an arrow.

- **An all-new hardware-driver model.** Hardware makers grumble that the different requirements of Windows 95 and Windows NT force them to develop two separate drivers for every device. The good news? Next year both operating systems will adopt a uniform driver model, allowing a single software driver to work with both Windows 97 and Windows NT. The bad news? The Windows NT driver flavor won't, raising the prospect that many older devices that worked well under Windows 95 won't work at all with Windows 97.

And, of course, you can expect an explosion of Internet applets to be bundled with either operating system. Besides the obligatory Web browser, expect viewers, helper applications, and possibly even a full suite of Web authoring tools.

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# Word Processor Superguide

Is the war of the word processors over? Is Microsoft's Word for Windows 95 the new business standard? Or do Lotus's Word Pro 96 and Corel's WordPerfect 6.1 have enough advantages to make you consider switching? To settle these questions once and for all, we brought the latest version of each into *PC Computing's* Usability Labs to see how they stack up.

What we found is that in many ways, the war *is* over. Word has become the de facto standard in the world of business. While Word Pro and WordPerfect have devoted followers and significant strengths, Word has edged both out in usability and mind share.

That's not to say that some offices won't be better off with Word Pro or WordPerfect. Word Pro, for example, offers the best collaboration and navigation tools, while WordPerfect offers the smoothest backward compatibility

BY WOODY LEONHARD

# Word Processors: Microsoft Word, Lotus Word Pro, and Corel WordPerfect

with previous versions. In the end, however, the products' similarities far outweigh their differences.

In the area of proofing tools, for example, the implementations vary widely, but the end result is the same. Meanwhile, Word's tag-along spell-checker (which highlights misspelled words as you type) and its right-mouse-button spelling correction are godsenders for the spelling-inhibited. WordPerfect offers "word forms" search-and-replace, which lets you change all the verb tenses in a single operation. So *make*, *makes*, and *made* can be changed to *build*, *builds*, and *built* with one mouse click. (Just be warned that this function doesn't always work. For example, *eat*, *ate*, and *eaten* somehow changed to *chomp*, *ate*, and *chomped*!)

Word Pro takes top honors for navigation tools. Borrowing from the tabbed-sheet approach in many spreadsheet programs, Word Pro creates divider tabs for each section of a document. Single-click navigation and click-and-drag reorganization, made possible by these tabs, are superior to both Word's and WordPerfect's navigation tools, particularly in large documents.

Each of the programs takes a slightly different approach to formatting. Word automatically formats sentence fragments as headings, or changes a line that starts with an asterisk into a bulleted list item. Word Pro's unique InfoBox puts all of a document's formatting options in one place; and since it's a live dialog box, your changes are immediately shown. WordPerfect's approach to formatting is less intuitive and often yields unexpected results (see "Top Ten Tips," page 156).

Another key area where these applications differ is integration. While all are reasonably well integrated into their respective suites, only Word and Word Pro have native Web-viewer abilities. Word can also function as an e-mail editor in Microsoft's Exchange. Of the three, Word Pro, with its Team-Review tools, makes the most of collaboration.

Reaching consensus on the best word processor is a bit like arguing about politics. There may not be a single right answer, and it's hard to separate the biases of the reviewer from the final analyses. You can't be any more objective about your favorite word processor than about your favorite baseball team. But whomever you're cheering for, you still want to know the score.

That's where *PC Computing* steps in. We examined the most recent upgrades to the three leading word-processing applications in our Usability Labs. To judge the efficiency of these products, we measured how quickly and easily typical users—both intermediate and advanced—performed various sets of business tasks. The results of our tests will help you decide not only which word processor is best for your needs, but also whether it's time to upgrade.

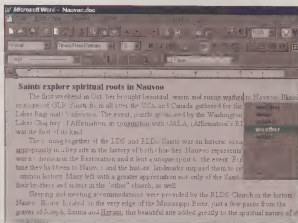
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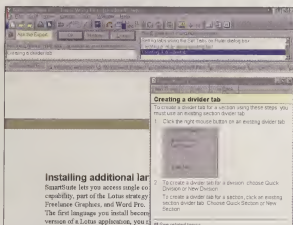
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## HIGHLIGHTS

### UNIQUE FEATURES: WORD AND WORD PRO



**Spell As You Type:** Word's tag-along spell-checker automatically marks a misspelling with a squiggly red underline as soon as you type the word. Right-clicking on the highlighted word brings up suggested alternatives. To make a correction, simply click on the desired replacement word.



**Easy Navigation:** Word Pro's excellent toolset includes an automatic tab-generator, which lets you move quickly from one section to another in a document by using a tabbed file-folder metaphor. To rearrange a document's components, just drag and drop the tabs to a different location.

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## Productivity Report Card

# Microsoft Word

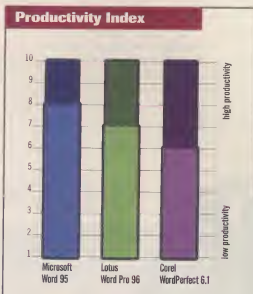
Features come and features go, but a word processor's usability—the way it all comes together—is what determines whether it will make you more productive. To find out which word processor has the usability advantage, *PC Computing's* Usability Labs put the three leading word processors—Microsoft's Word for Windows 95, Lotus's Word Pro 96, and Corel's WordPerfect 6.1—through a series of representative business tasks.

We chose both intermediate and advanced

users to test these products. We gave each tester a script of common word-processing tasks, such as creating and formatting letters, adding tables, and printing documents. Advanced users were also asked to create templates and use the programs' mail-merge features. We set a time limit for each task, and allowed our testers to use printed documentation and online help to accomplish their tasks.

When we rated our testers' productivity—the number of tasks they completed within the allotted time—Word came out on top. It showed the highest completion rate and earned a score of eight out of ten in *PC Computing's* Productivity Index. This index takes into account user satisfaction, the number of tasks completed successfully, the effectiveness of the programs' help functions, the features of each product, and the testers' final preference.

WordPerfect's completion rate nearly matched Word's, while Word Pro came in close behind. For online help, Word users chalked up the highest success rate, with more than half of all searches turning up the needed answer. WordPerfect and Word Pro also provide competent if imperfect



## Importing Text and Graphics

| Lotus Word Pro 96 | Microsoft Word 95 | Corel WordPerfect 6.1 |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| ✓                 |                   |                       |

**Page Content:** All three applications did well at importing text onto a page, but Word Pro gained the edge when it came to importing a graph. Its advantage was in part its thorough documentation. When testers searched for "Insert Graph" in Word Pro's online help, they found concise instructions. Graph help was less specific in Word and WordPerfect.

## Adjusting Fonts and Formats

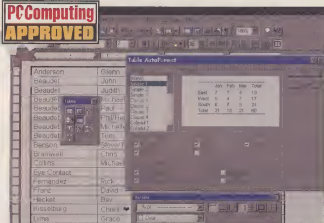
| Lotus Word Pro 96 | Microsoft Word 95 | Corel WordPerfect 6.1 |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
|                   | ✓                 | ✓                     |

**Document Design:** Basic font and paragraph formatting was straightforward in all three, but Word and WordPerfect performed better with advanced functions. Both handle drop-caps automatically, for example, but in Word Pro the user must first insert a frame and then put a character in it. Testers also found applying headers and footers much less confusing in Word and WordPerfect.

# Beats the Competition



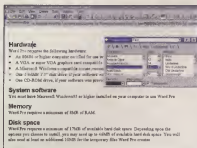
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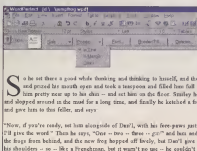
**Fast Formatting:** Microsoft's Word for Windows 95, the usability winner, makes formatting tables easy. Its Table AutoFormat feature provides options for quick table-styling. Adding and deleting rows and columns is simple with its Table toolbar. Testers also liked the Borders toolbar, which, like all of Word's toolbars, is fully customizable.

online help; both were able to resolve over half of the testers' queries.

When testers completed the test script, we asked them to pick the word-processing application they preferred overall, based on their experience in our Labs. Their choice was clear: Microsoft's Word was the favorite of half the testers, thanks to its logical and consistent interface. Lotus's Word Pro was the runner-up in user-satisfaction. Testers



**All in One:** The InfoBox in Lotus's Word Pro 96 puts all formatting options in one place. Advanced users found it handy, but some less-experienced testers thought it was intimidating.



**Mixed Results:** Corel's WordPerfect 6.1 has many unique features, but not all of them are intuitive. Expert users found WordPerfect easy to use, but less-experienced users had problems.

noted that they liked many of Word Pro's new features but found its quirky interface annoying at times. "This software behaves differently from the others," remarked one tester. And while Corel's WordPerfect was deemed a capable product, testers thought it was showing its age: They would welcome a 32-bit Windows 95 upgrade. A small minority of our testers said they would choose WordPerfect.

## Creating and Formatting Tables

| Lotus Word Pro 96 | Microsoft Word 95 | Corel WordPerfect 6.1 |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
|                   | ✓                 | ✓                     |

**Structured Data:** Creating a new table proved easy with all three products. But difficulties arose in Word Pro when testers tried to format and make changes to an existing table. Word Pro let testers create a new column in the existing table, but deleted the selected text in the process. In Word and WordPerfect, users were able to select text and easily add it to an existing table.

## Printing and Merging Data

| Lotus Word Pro 96 | Microsoft Word 95 | Corel WordPerfect 6.1 |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
|                   | ✓                 |                       |

**Document Handling:** Intermediate testers were stymied by Word Pro's inability to easily print selected text only, a feature that is offered in Word. When advanced-level users were asked to perform a mail merge, they had no problem in Word or Word Pro. However, WordPerfect could handle the data file only if it was first converted into a table—an unwelcome and tedious process.



# True to Your Word

If you already own the latest release of one of the top three word processors and you know how to use it, there's no compelling reason to switch brands. Their feature sets remain fairly similar—leapfrogging one another with each new version.

On the other hand, if you're running Windows 95 and you're still using a 16-bit word processor, it's time to consider an upgrade. Corporate decision makers who want to upgrade an office to Windows 95 should avoid investing in 16-bit obsolescence. Their choice is between the two 32-bit products: Microsoft's Word and Lotus's Word Pro. Both offer state-of-the-art integration with many of the other office products you use.

With its recent acquisition of WordPerfect, Corel plans to offer WordPerfect 6.1 for Windows only as part of an application suite for Windows 95 called WordPerfect Office, Standard Edition. It includes—among other applications—Quattro Pro, Presentations and Netscape's Navigator. A Windows 95 version of the suite isn't expected until the summer.

A sound buying decision shouldn't be made on the

merits of the word processor alone. It's also important to consider the other products—spreadsheet, presentation, and database applications—bundled in the office suite that includes the word processor you want. Buying a suite, like Microsoft's Office, Lotus's SmartSuite, or Corel's WordPerfect Office, is the most efficient and cost-effective solution. The suites' components are designed to work together with a consistent interface.

Integration with coworkers is also an important consideration. If you frequently exchange documents with other folks and they use Corel's WordPerfect, you'll probably want to use it, too. However, WordPerfect's long delay in upgrading and its frequent changes in ownership have given many buyers pause.

If you want an easy-to-use, 32-bit word processor, the results from our Usability Labs point to Word as the best choice. Yet Word Pro is a close contender, and also deserves your consideration.

*Usability Lab testing performed by* GEORGE HACKMAN, JR., LULIT BEZUAYEHU, *and* LYDIA M. KARLOWICZ

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**2** Choose the next most important factor.

**3** What else is important?

**4** For your needs the best product is ...



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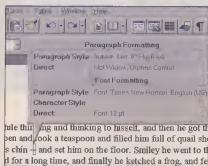
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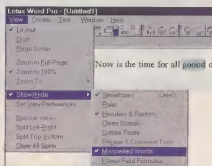
# Top Ten Tips

It's not the high-end features that determine how productive you can be in your word processor, it's the features you use everyday that can really slow you down. We looked at common tasks that tripped up our usability testers—then found the best workarounds. Even in cases where testers completed tasks, there was often a faster, smarter way to do the same thing. The tips that follow are guaranteed to make you more productive, regardless of which word processor you use.

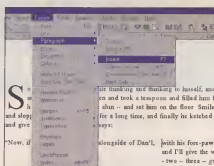
## Tip 1: Text Handling



**Word:** To see the formatting that is currently applied to a character or paragraph, or to get a detailed explanation of any element on a Word screen, click on the Arrow/Question Mark icon on the toolbar. Then click on the character, paragraph, or element.



**Word Pro:** To have misspelled words appear with a blue highlight as soon as you type them, click on View, Show/Hide, and then check Misspelled Words. If you find the bright blue highlighting distracting, click again to remove the check mark.

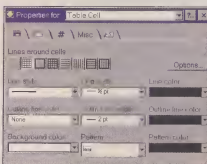


**WordPerfect:** If you place the cursor inside a paragraph at random, and click on Format, Paragraph, Indent, then indenting will start at the cursor, shifting the margin of subsequent lines. Place the cursor at the paragraph's beginning before applying the change.

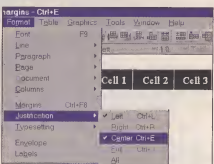
## Tip 2: Creating Tables

|  |       |                                 |
|--|-------|---------------------------------|
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**Word:** When you create a table with Insert, Table, dotted table lines appear in a document but do not print. If you want the lines to print, right-click anywhere on the toolbar and select Borders from the pop-up menu. This will display the Borders toolbar.



**Word Pro:** New tables have printable grid lines by default. To change them, right-click inside one of the table's cells, then choose Cell Formatting. Word Pro's InfoBox appears with the Table Cell tab showing, and gives you access to table-formatting options.



**WordPerfect:** If you select an entire table, click on Format, Justification, then pick Left, Right, or Center. You'll expect this setting to apply to all the selected cells, but it affects only the first cell. Use the Table, Format menu to change a whole table's justification.

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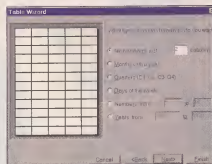


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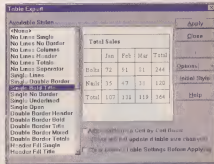
## Tip 3: Formatting Tables



**Word:** The Table Wizard walks you through a list of table options and predefined styles. Click on Table, Insert Table, then Wizard.

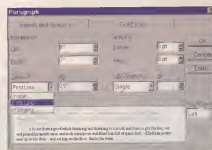


**Word Pro:** If you find the icons on the Table button hard to decipher, wait for the tip balloon to appear. Or better yet, use the Table menu.

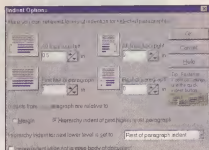


**WordPerfect:** The Table Expert offers many options that would be hard to create manually. Click on Table, Create, and Table Expert.

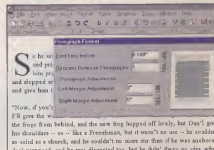
## Tip 4: Paragraph Indenting



**Word:** The Left setting under Format, Paragraph Indentation changes a paragraph's margin—not its indent. To indent a paragraph, use Special, First Line.

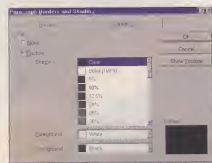


**Word Pro:** To set a paragraph's left margin and indent, go into the InfoBox and click on Options. You must close the box to see the changes.

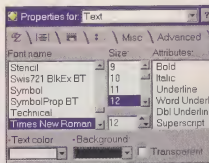


**WordPerfect:** Choosing Format, Paragraph, Indent changes a left margin, not an indent. Use Format, Paragraph, Format to indent a first line.

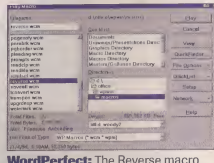
## Tip 5: Reverse Type (White on Black)




**Word:** Two steps are required. Click on Format, Borders and Shading, then the Shading tab. Set Foreground to white and Background to black.



**Word Pro:** First, right-click on the text to bring up the InfoBox. Then change Text Color to white and Background to black.



**WordPerfect:** The Reverse macro works well—if you know where to find it. Click on Tools, Macro, Play, and pick reverse.wcm from the list. Then click on Play again.



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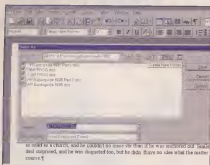
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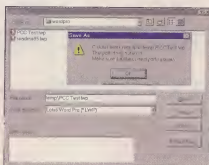
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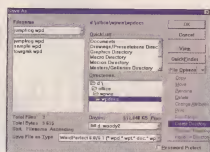
## Tip 6: Saving to a New Folder



**Word:** To create a new folder from the File, Save As dialog box, click on the folder icon with the star in it (not on it), and type a folder name.

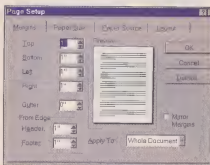


**Word Pro:** Typing a path in the Save As dialog box causes an error. Instead, click on the Folder and Star icon to create a new folder.

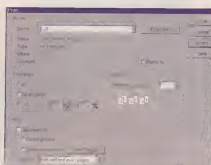


**WordPerfect:** The New Directory option is hidden under the File Options button. Remember to use only 8-dot-3 filenames when you're saving to a new folder.

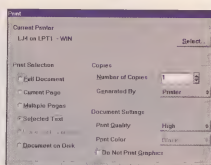
## Tip 7: Custom Printing



**Word:** Want to change all the margins in your document? Look in the File, Page Setup menu—not in the Format, Paragraph menu.

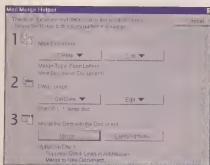


**Word Pro:** You can't easily print selected text. Instead, you have to create a new document, copy the text to the document, and then print it.

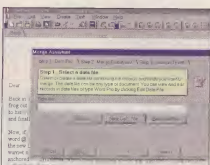


**WordPerfect:** For quick access to printing options, click on the Printer icon on the toolbar. Make your selections and then click on Print.

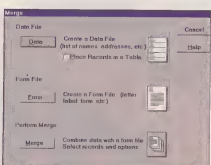
## Tip 8: Mail Merge



**Word:** The Merge Wizard gives extensive guidance through the thorny task of mail merge. Look under Tools, Mail Merge.



**Word Pro:** The Merge Assistant is located under the Text, Merge menu. Follow the three-step process outlined on the tabs.



**WordPerfect:** When merging a flat file (plain ASCII text), you have to convert the file to a table before you start the merge.

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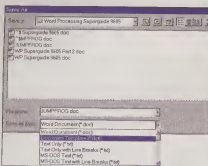


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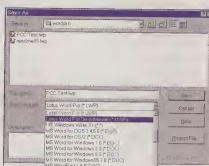
We're open 8am-10pm Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm Saturday (Eastern Time).



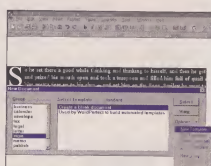
## Tip 9: Creating a Template



**Word:** To save a current document as a template, simply choose File, Save As, and pick Document Template. This puts the dot extension on your filename.

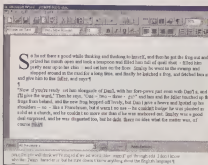


**Word Pro:** Choose File, Save As, and under Save As Type, choose Lotus Word Pro SmartMaster (MWP format).

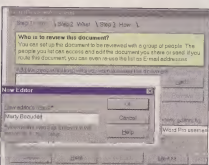


**WordPerfect:** Select the entire document, then Edit, Copy. Click on File, New. Then under Options pick New Template. Paste and save.

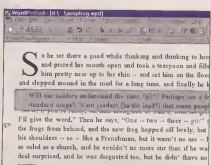
## Tip 10: Annotating a Shared Document



**Word:** Choose Insert, then Annotation. The reviewer's initials appear in the document body and their comments in a window at the bottom.

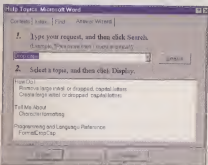


**Word Pro:** TeamReview works way beyond mere annotations. Click on File, TeamReview, and follow the Assistant through the options.

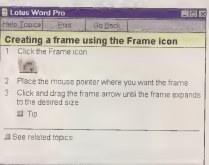


**WordPerfect:** Choose Insert, Comment. Your comment is noted with a tiny icon in the left margin. Click on it to read or edit your remarks.

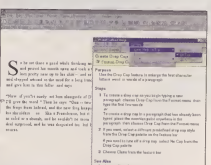
## Bonus Tip: Finding Help



**Word:** The Answer Wizard (located in the Help menu) stays onscreen above your document for easy reference while you work.



**Word Pro:** The Expert tool had no info on drop-caps, and instead gave help on creating a frame. When the Expert is stumped, use Help, Topics, Find option.



**WordPerfect:** To keep Help visible onscreen, bring up a Help box, then click on Options, Keep Help on Top, On Top.

# The audio experience from our new Sound Blaster is so real, when you find out what you've been missing, you'll just die.



## Life is too short to be stuck

with an ordinary sound card. Whether you're a hard-core gamer or an audiophile, the new Sound Blaster® AWE32™ PnP is simply too die for.

The AWE 32 is the breakthrough audio fanatics have been waiting for. It delivers the shocking realism of professional wave table synthesis – which uses actual recordings of real sound effects and

musical instruments. With 32-note polyphony, it can play up to 32 notes simultaneously, adding deadly new detail and richness to your favorite games and software.

The AWE 32 is the first sound card with 3-D Positional Audio™. Suddenly you can hear the metallic click of the shotguns trigger over your left shoulder. It also features Creative's 3D Stereo Enhancement™ Technology, which makes your whole system sound fuller and more powerful so you'll have absolutely nowhere to hide.

Really want to push the envelope? Our upgradeable SoundFont® technology lets you add new sounds. Or you can add up to 28 MB of memory to create your own sound library. We even included software for editing music and sound effects. And, of course, the AWE 32 is fully Plug and Play compatible and works with Windows® 95, Windows 3.1 and DOS. So installation is a no-brainer.

To experience the ultimate reality, team the AWE32 with a bullet fast Blaster CD™ 8x and Sound Blaster Speakers™ – available at your nearest Creative Labs dealer. But do it today

because tomorrow may be too late.

[www.creativelabs.com](http://www.creativelabs.com)

## Introducing Sound Blaster AWE32 PnP. Hear What You've Been Missing

### Your Ultimate Sound Card



Sound Blaster AWE 32 PnP



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For more information call our Feedback Service at 800-372-5227 or Customer Service at 800-998-5227 x131. ©Copyright 1996, Creative Technology Ltd. All rights reserved. Sound Blaster and the Creative Labs logo are registered trademarks, and Sound Blaster AWE32, 3D Positional Audio, 3D Stereo Enhancement Technology and Blaster CD are trademarks of Creative Technology. SoundFont is a registered trademark and 3D positional Audio is a trademark of E.A. GAMES, Inc.

Circle 108 on reader service card.

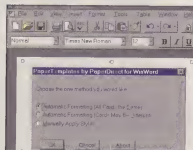
# Useful Extras

Many of the innovations that you find in word processors originate as add-ons: Little software companies pioneer new features and integrate them into the base product. The big software companies often pick up on the best of these utilities for their new versions, while the small companies scurry to devise a new crop of add-ons. If you're looking for a more productive way to use your word processor, or if you have special needs your application doesn't address, check out these packages.

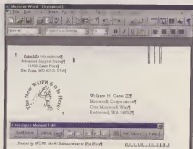
## Word Processor Add-ons

| Product  | Price*     | Works With   | Features   |
|--|------------|--|--|
| <b>AccessData WDPass, LTPass, and WRPass</b><br>(800) 489-5199<br><i>Reader Service No. 813</i>                | \$185 each | Word (WDPass), Word Pro (LTPass), WordPerfect (WRPass) | Amazing password "cracker" that unlocks password-protected documents in its respective word-processor app. The only solution to a forgotten password.  |
| <b>Adobe Viewer95</b><br>(800) 624-6107<br><i>Reader Service No. 814</i>                                       | \$50       | Word, WordPerfect                                      | Full file viewing and import abilities in more than 100 formats, including the Web format, HTML.   |
| <b>Adobe Word for Word 7.0</b><br>(800) 624-6107<br><i>Reader Service No. 815</i>                              | \$100      | Word, WordPerfect                                      | A file converter that supports bidirectional translation of more than 100 formats. Integrates into Word, or runs by itself.                            |
| <b>Alki Software MasterWord 95</b><br>(800) 669-9673<br><i>Reader Service No. 816</i>                          | \$40       | Word   | Easy Menu showing fonts in native typeface; wizards for decorative borders, headers/footers, and watermarks; powerful file commands; improved Help.    |
| <b>PaperDirect PaperTemplates</b><br>(800) 272-7377<br><i>Reader Service No. 817</i>                           | \$40       | Word, Word Pro, WordPerfect                            | Templates tied to PaperDirect's extensive line of custom paper products. Brochures, awards, business cards, envelopes, and letterheads.                |
| <b>Pinecliff Int'l WOPR 95</b><br>(800) 659-4696<br><i>Reader Service No. 818</i>                              | \$50       | Word   | Innovative document navigation; versatile envelope generator; booklet and thumbnail printer; Toolbar manager.  |
| <b>Prime Consulting Group Prime 6</b><br>(800) 788-0787<br><i>Reader Service No. 819</i>                       | \$40       | Word   | AutoCorrect and AutoText manager; crop mark generator; fast-batch spell-checker; window rearranger; custom zoom slider; macro routines.                |
| <b>Streetwise Software Design Portfolio</b><br>(800) 743-6765<br><i>Reader Service No. 820</i>                 | \$60       | WordPerfect  | Templates for brochures, letterheads, newsletters, certificates, résumés, mailing labels, and more. Library of custom clip art with thumbnail browser. |
| <b>Streetwise Software Lifetime Encyclopedia of Letters</b><br>(800) 743-6765<br><i>Reader Service No. 821</i> | \$50       | WordPerfect  | More than 850 letters for every occasion, from job hunting to fund-raising to bill collecting. Powerful search abilities; direct links to WordPerfect. |

\*ESTIMATED STREET PRICE



**Perfect Fit:** PaperDirect offers a huge collection of templates keyed to its laser-ready custom papers.



**Easy Envelopes:** WOPR 95 makes formatting envelopes simple with logos, notes, and bar codes.



**Time-saver:** Creating a letter takes just a few mouse clicks with Lifetime Encyclopedia of Letters.

# You'll have to search the galaxy to find a more realistic multimedia experience than this.

There's not much doubt that intelligent life forms exist somewhere else in the universe. The question is: Are their multimedia systems as advanced as ours?

The new **Sound Blaster 8x Kits** make your current multimedia system seem like something out of a history book. They give you a brain-blasting 8x CD-ROM drive that makes all your CD-ROM

software perform at warp speed. The 8x drive uses an IDE interface and is compatible with

multiple standards including

Photo CD and CD EXTRA.

You also get one of the hottest sound cards on the planet — the **Sound Blaster 32 PnP**.

It delivers the brilliant realism of **32-note polyphony** and **wave-table synthesis**, adding new detail and richness to both sound effects and music. It also features

Creative's **3D Stereo Enhancement Technology** to make your whole system sound better.

Since the search for bargains is universal, a fat collection of the hottest new games and software comes with every kit. **Sound Blaster Performance 8x** is designed for the multimedia fanatic. **Sound Blaster Discovery CD 8x** takes the whole family to the cutting edge. Both come with a pair of **Sound Blaster speakers** powerful enough to attract low-flying spacecraft. If you're looking for the ultimate CD-ROM upgrade, **Blaster CD 8x** gives you mach speed and great software to boot.

So the next time you see aliens from your window, just point them to the nearest Creative Labs dealer. Think of it as a way to promote harmony in the universe.



Great software rules in every kit.

## Introducing Sound Blaster 8x Multimedia Upgrade Kits

|                              | CD-ROM       | Speakers | Sound Card               |
|------------------------------|--------------|----------|--------------------------|
| Typical Multimedia System    | CD-ROM Drive | Speakers | Play Audio CDs and Games |
| Sound Blaster Multimedia Kit | 8x           | 8x       | 8x                       |

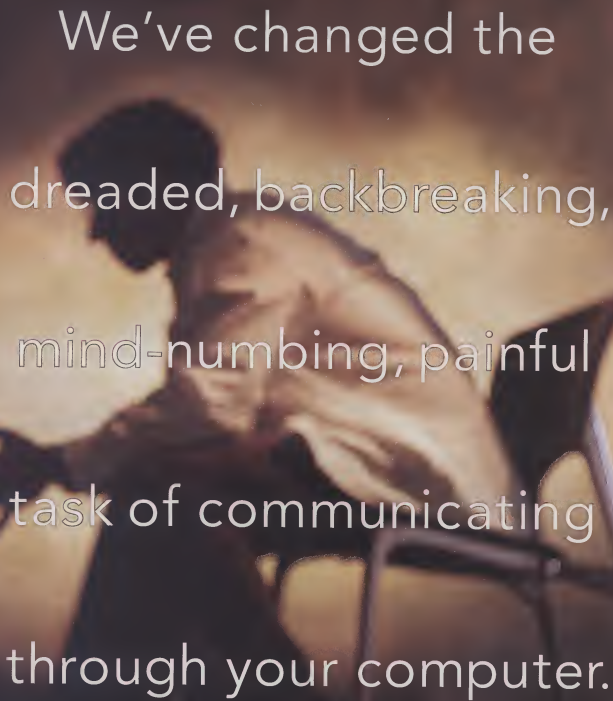


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We've changed the  
dreaded, backbreaking,  
mind-numbing, painful  
task of communicating  
through your computer.

*(All right, slight exaggeration.)*



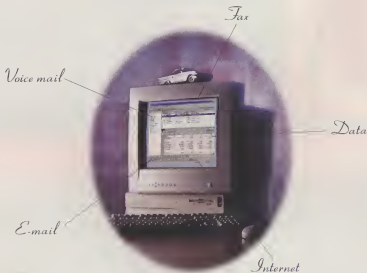
## *Introducing FocalPoint*



O.K, so maybe communicating through your computer isn't something you'd consider

all of your messages, you check a single in-box. You only need to manage one address book, as well. And you can also create a single message, address it to multiple people and the message will be sent out in the preferred

incredibly taxing and laborious, but it can be, shall we say, a major hassle.



That's why Global Village, the maker of award-winning FaxWorks™ software, has introduced FocalPoint™ integrated communications software. Only FocalPoint lets you fax, transfer files, exchange e-mail, access the Internet and manage phone calls all from one window on your computer, making communicating easier than ever.

Because FocalPoint integrates all of these full-featured capabilities, you don't have to constantly switch between applications. To get

method for each person, like e-mail, fax, what have you.

FocalPoint is fully compatible with both Windows® 3.1 and Windows 95, so visit your local reseller and give it a try.

Or, call 800.436.6752 ext. 1265 for a free trial copy on CD-ROM and visit our Web site at <http://www.globalvillage.com/fp5/> for more information.

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**See You  
Online!**

# 3D GETS Real!

## Take your PC into the next dimension with amazing new 3-D products

**E**ver try walking through a newly designed office or remodeled kitchen before it's built? How about flying through the secret shelves of the Vatican library from your desktop? It's all possible with today's new 3-D video cards, software, displays, sound cards, and games—and they cost less than you'd expect.

Following years of hype about virtual reality, walk-through online shopping malls, and desktop movie studios, the technology to make these notions reality is finally affordable. The World Wide Web, computer games, and even essential business applications are moving out of the flat 2-D world and into the next dimension.

The switch to 3-D was inevitable. After all, we see, hear, and interact with the world in three dimensions. But

---

BY STEVE DITLEA

## Guided Tour: Live Graphics, Web Worlds

until recently, that reality eluded our computers.

At the heart of the 3-D computing era are fast Pentium CPUs and true 32-bit operating systems. The first feature-length computer-animated movie, Disney's hit *Toy Story*, was created on Silicon Graphics workstations just last year. And today's PCs can generate the same detailed animations for about half of the cost.

Still, there's great disagreement about what constitutes true 3-D. Things we think of as 3-D, like the mayhem-filled corridors of Doom or the interior of the Starship Enterprise in Apple's QuickTime VR, are actually 2-D. To save on computing power, these graphics are designed like Hollywood movie sets with flat scenery and no depth—even characters are 2-D facades.

At the very least, 3-D images have depth: You can rotate objects or "walk" around them onscreen to see every facet. In contrast to skeletal wire frames, 3-D images are rendered in color with lighting and shading that appear with reflections and shadows, as they would in the real world. The ultimate in 3-D—immersive

3-D, or virtual reality—places you in a computer-generated environment where you interact with objects just as you do in the physical world. Eventually, much of computing will have immersive 3-D. A host of technologies is leading the way.

**Depth-Defying Graphics** Taking advantage of faster platforms and video, 3-D graphics programs have come an astonishingly long way in a short time. Only two years ago it was common to have separate programs for 3-D modeling, surface rendering, and animation. Like productivity software, which is often sold in office-suite bundles, graphics packages are increasingly integrated into a single studio package that includes all the functions necessary to produce 3-D illustrations and animations.

As with office suites, a low-end niche has emerged in the 3-D graphics arena, spawning 3-D "lite" graphics products that are extremely easy to use, often including templates and predrawn models. For \$49, Visual Software's Instant 3D works with 3-D text and clip art to spiff up documents and presentations. Media Synergy's \$40 VR Workshop+ is a 3-D animation starter kit for home offices and hobbyists; although it's hardly virtual reality, it does offer a primer on turning your PC into a desktop movie studio. Asymetrix's \$79 3D F/X lets you make elaborate



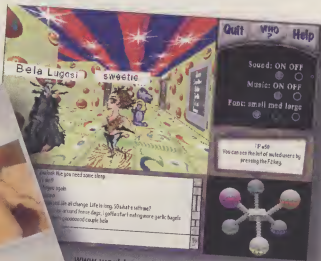
#### Sound and Space:

3DTV's \$169 3-D Magic is a combination of shutter glasses and the first 3-D stereoscopic audio CD-ROM.

## ON THE WEB

LOSE YOURSELF IN **ANOTHER WORLD**

**Another Dimension:** The rush to bring 3-D to the Internet has been remarkable, thanks in large part to the VRML Web-publishing format that has become the de facto industry standard. While most Web sites are still flat, plenty of hot-shot developers are giving you a glimpse of the future, such as this 3-D gallery from Silicon Graphics (below).



[www.worlds.net/](http://www.worlds.net/)

**Cyber Cities:** At the World Chat site (above) you embody a 3-D character and chat with other surfers. Also, Worlds Inc. is creating a VRML society called Alpha World ([www.worlds.net/products/alphaworld/](http://www.worlds.net/products/alphaworld/)). While you're at it, don't forget to visit ZiffNet's Terminal Reality site ([www.zdnet.com/~zdi/vrml/content/vrmlsite/outside.wrl](http://www.zdnet.com/~zdi/vrml/content/vrmlsite/outside.wrl)).

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ENNE FRIEDLANDER

spinning, panning, and dolly effects by simply clicking on objects and dragging them onscreen.

The most popular of the midrange, integrated 3-D packages, Ray Dream Studio (\$299) and CorelDraw 6 (\$450), beefed up their animation and presentation features for their first Windows 95 releases. Also, a new \$499 entry from multimedia-software champ Macromedia, Extreme 3D, offers top-notch performance for desktop publishers and multimedia developers.

At the high end of 3-D graphics software, Windows NT is emerging as the operating system of choice. The hottest titles here include Autodesk's beefed-up \$3,495 3-D Studio Max, which is based on Autodesk's 3-D Studio Release 4, the best-selling professional 3-D animation program for MS-DOS. The first Windows NT version of Microsoft's famed Softimage 3D software for Silicon Graphics workstations is also popular, albeit expensive (\$7,995).

**Quick-Vision Cards** Of course, 32-bit software puts hefty demands on your hardware. The greatest leap in 3-D performance comes from the latest wave of graphics-accelerator cards, which bring workstation-level image processing to Pentium- and 486-based PCs. The first of this wave is the Glimt graphics chip from 3DLabs. This chip supports Silicon Graphics' OpenGL library of graphics tools, the current standard for 3-D

imaging on high-end Silicon Graphics workstations.

The latest \$250 to \$350 3-D accelerator boards for home computers offer performance levels once found exclusively on \$30,000 workstations. The first such board is the \$349 Glimt-based 3D Blaster from Creative Labs. It accelerates the graphics performance of a 66MHz 486 CPU to nearly that of a 90MHz Pentium. Its PCI version for Pentium-based PCs spurs frame rates for smoother animation, corrects perspective, and smoothes jaggies that mar most PC graphics.

Because there are no industry standards for 3-D graphics accelerators, many video-card makers offer their own proprietary chips: For example, Creative Labs' next-generation 3D Blaster will use the Verite accelerator chip from Rendition. And Diamond Multimedia's \$269 Edge 3D board uses nVidia's new NV1 chip, which also includes 2-D graphics acceleration,



**Depth Perception:** Diamond's \$269 Edge 3D uses nVidia's new NV1 3-D chip to accelerate 3-D graphics in Windows.

**Virtual View:** VRML is only as good as the browser you use. Among the best VRML plug-ins for Netscape are Silicon Graphics' WebSpace (below), Wrl Alpha 5b from Vream ([www.vream.com/3d1.html](http://www.vream.com/3d1.html)), and VRealm from Integrated Data Systems ([www.idsnet.com/ids/download.html](http://www.idsnet.com/ids/download.html)). For a stand-alone VRML browser, check out InterVista's WorldView site ([www.webmaster.com:80/wrml/](http://www.webmaster.com:80/wrml/)).



#### Here Are The Best VRML Sites On The Web:

- **Check out how** [Interactive Design and Animation](#) from [Macromedia](#) use WebFX and RealAudio!
- **Virtual Tour** Check out how WebFX and ShockWave are used together!

[Grafman's VR World](#) gives you a Wintery scene, the very cool and a fun experience.

[www.paperinc.com/wrml.html](http://www.paperinc.com/wrml.html)

#### Grafman's VR Snowman

4618 new snowmen have been created since December 4.

This form generates a unique VRML snowman.

Specify the number of body segments you want your snowman to have:

Body Segments:

Resize:

**More Hot Sites:** For a list of the best VRML sites on the Web, try Netwatch ([www.pulver.com/netwatch/topnet/tt21.htm](http://www.pulver.com/netwatch/topnet/tt21.htm)). Numerical Aerodynamic Simulation (NAS) maintains a list of hot VRML sites ([www.nas.nasa.gov/nas/webweavers/vrml.html](http://www.nas.nasa.gov/nas/webweavers/vrml.html)). And check out Paper Software's list of the latest in VRML (above), including VRML use with RealAudio Player and Macromedia's Shockwave. For live links to all these sites, visit our Web site ([www.pccomputing.com](http://www.pccomputing.com)).



## Guided Tour: Stereo Vision, Virtual Reality

MPEG video, and wavetable sound—an all-in-one approach likely to be adopted by other companies.

But for professional and business markets, Glint-based cards rule. And prices are falling steadily. Soon after Omnicon Graphics introduced its \$1,995 3Demon, a PCI board powered by 3DLabs' new Glint 300SX chip, Fujitsu lowered the price on its 300SX-based board, Sapphire 3D Designer, to \$995. The news will only get better in the months ahead.

**Better Than Being There** Daring new designs in input and output devices are bridging the gap between user and computer. To get a sense of how immersive 3-D graphics look, imagine shifting the contents of your PC screen to match your point of view whenever you turn or tilt your head. Ultimately, you'll interact with your PC using all of your senses.

A position-sensing, stereoscopic head-mounted display was created for the NASA lab that first developed virtual reality in 1984. The display's original \$8,000 price tag hasn't changed much—until recently. Now as little as \$799 buys a Windows 95-ready, futuristic, stereoscopic display with head-tracking. The device is actually a pair of optically magnified 0.7-inch, active-matrix LCD screens mounted in a goggles-like unit that senses head motion along x, y, and z axes.

Top walk-through and game programs have been

optimized for each of the top three immersive head-mounted displays. The most comprehensive of this new hardware, Forte Technologies' \$999 VFX1 HeadGear, looks like it came right out of *Star Wars*. The helmet has large headphones that make you feel completely isolated from everyday reality. With its less-constricting visor and smaller headphones, the \$799 CyberMaxx 2.0 from VictorMaxx Technologies displays the biggest image of these head-mounted displays. Meanwhile, distinguished by its open-view design resembling eyeglasses, Virtual i-O's \$799 Virtual i-glasses is the best-selling virtual reality headset.

For less than \$200 you don't get the immersion of a head-mounted display, but you can still see PC images in-depth wearing stereoscopic 3-D glasses. StereoGraphics, a veteran developer of 3-D glasses for high-end computer-aided design and manufacturing applications, recently introduced its first product for home PCs: SimulEyes VR (\$139), a pair of lightweight liquid-crystal glasses that alternately reveals



**Darth Vader:** Forte Technologies' bizarre-looking \$999 VFX1 helmet provides total 3-D immersion for games.

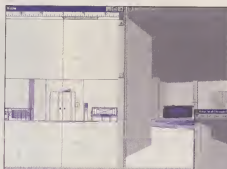
## WALK-THROUGH

CREATE AND EXPLORE YOUR OWN CUSTOM DESIGN

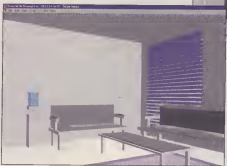
3-D doesn't stop with modeling and animation. A new class of drafting and design applications lets you create an entire environment through which you can move smoothly in any direction while the computer quickly redraws your created world in real time. Such walk-throughs are a boon to architects, engineers, set designers, and Web-page designers.

Two widely used immersive 3-D packages, Virtus's \$395 WalkThrough Pro 2.5 and Vream's \$449 VRCreator, also export files in VRML format, the standard for 3-D applications on the Internet.

The two most versatile and detailed walk-through programs, Sense8's \$995 WorldToolKit for Windows and Superscape's \$3,995 Superscape VRT, each contain ample tools for skilled programmers. Books That Work offers 3D Kitchen (\$49), a more limited program that leads the way in easy-to-use virtual-reality packages.



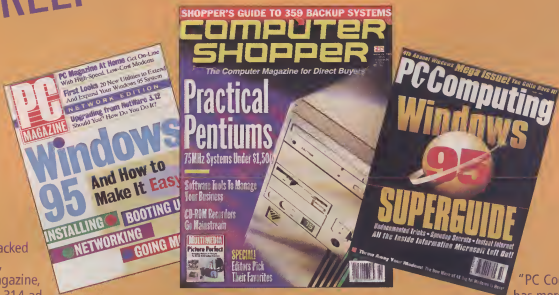
**View It:** Fly through or walk around models using the mouse cursor.



**Build It:** Virtus's WalkThrough Pro 2.5 shows both a traditional 2-D Top view (left) and a full 3-D Walk view (right).

**Explore It:** The 3-D Walk view lets you experience a model from different perspectives, including side and overhead views. Step around objects or zoom in for a closer look.

# WE KEEP COMING OUT ON TOP.



"As tracked by PIB, PC Magazine, with 6,314 ad pages for the year, built a commanding lead early and then competed solely against its own record, far ahead of the pack."  
—Ad Age

"Computer Shopper is CCR's clear choice as the #1 performer in '95. Even with two cover price increases in the last two years, it's newsstand sales are up another 8% in '95."  
—Capell's Circulation Report

"PC Computing has more than doubled its rate base since 1990\*...PC Computing issues some of the cleanest Audit Reports in the industry."  
—Capell's Circulation Report

## OF COURSE, YOU'D EXPECT THAT FROM ZIFF-DAVIS.

No sooner did Ad Age name PC Magazine the winner in the race for 1995 ad pages than Capell's Circulation Report produced its Top 10 list for circulation performance. Computer Shopper came out on top and PC Computing was #3.

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\*Not delivered daily from 1988-1991. Source: PIB, Inc. 1991

## Guided Tour: Surround Sound, Tactile Feedback

left- and right-eye views of 3-D graphics onscreen. Hobbyists may want to tinker with 3DTV's \$169 3-D Magic, which combines shutter glasses and the first 3-D stereoscopic CD-ROM. Or try NuVision's \$79 Home PC Game Glasses.

While head-mounted and stereoscopic display prices plummet, low-cost 3-D input devices for PCs have yet to appear. Hobbyists eager to grasp objects in cyberspace have been known to adapt Mattel's \$89 PowerGlove—which was released in 1989 for TV-based Nintendo video games—so that it works with today's Windows-based computer games as well. Right now, the only Windows 95-compatible glove input device, Virtual Technologies' CyberGlove, comes complete with tactile feedback for simulating touch, but costs a staggering \$14,800. Even Logitech's comparatively low-cost Magellan controller, used for positioning a mouse in 3-D space, costs \$550—affordable for professional design use but not for games or edutainment. Look for cheaper 3-D input devices to appear as more 3-D software comes to market.

**Audio Immersion** With the multimedia speakers that flank most monitors today, stereophonic audio is dispersed in a flat plane between the left and right speakers. With 3-D audio, those same speakers can make sounds that seem to come from over your shoulder, resulting in truly stirring presentations and intense game sessions.

There are several competing technologies for 3-D audio. All of Packard Bell's multimedia PCs, for example, use Sound Retrieval System (SRS) technology from SRS Labs. SRS works by processing existing stereo signals to simulate spatial relationships that a listener distinguishes with the outer ear, adding and subtracting left and right signals, and remixing these signals into the stereo sound.

NEC Technologies and other companies offer SRS in their latest multimedia PCs. Crystal Lake Multimedia's 3D Sound Series 140 sound cards feature SRS as well.

Creative Labs' top-of-the-line Sound Blaster Awe32 Plug and Play \$249 sound card, on the other hand, includes a QSound sonic enhancer, which plays audio tracks that have been spatially encoded. It achieves the 3-D effect by recombining the left and right channels of information with time delays to create the illusion of sounds in front of or behind the listener.

Audio Reality technology from Crystal River Engineering offers the best individual placement of sounds. The company's Alphasound sound card was the first to include Audio Reality. Spatializer Audio Laboratories' \$250 Spatializer HTMS-2510, another proprietary 3-D sound device, also enhances existing stereo sound. It processes the midrange portion of the sound spectrum, inserting time delays to provide an illusion of greater space beyond the left and right speakers.

The Spatializer HTMS-2510 has been included in Compaq's Presario PCs since the fall of 1995, and can be added to other multimedia PCs with products such as Labtec's \$50 Imager LCS-9210 (a stand-alone unit the size of Sony's WalkMan). These prices alone prove that 3-D has indeed arrived.

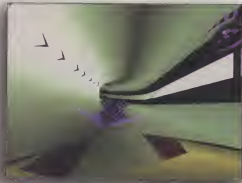


**Space Reach:** Logitech's \$550 Magellan pointing device positions your cursor along x, y, and z coordinates in true 3-D space.

## GAMES FAST, FUTURISTIC FUN

The splashiest 3-D technology for PCs is found in games. Microsoft had games in mind when it created 2-D DirectDraw API for Windows 95, which speeds up the drawing and redrawing of game objects. More recently, Microsoft created Reality Lab 3D API, which is designed for high-speed rendering.

The first game to use Reality Labs' 3-D graphics library is CyberSpeed from Mindscape—a fast-track, futuristic, grand prix racing game every bit as swift and detailed as a similar title on the Sony PlayStation game console. GT Interactive's Locus (above right), another entertainment program that invokes Microsoft's 3-D API set, is a fast-moving vehicular competition that takes place in



**Don't Blink:** Designed specifically for head-mounted virtual-reality displays, GT Interactive's Locus immerses you in high-speed chase scenes.

futuristic 3-D environments.

Like many of today's Windows 95 games, these titles come optimized for one or another of the major 3-D

graphics accelerator cards, head-mounted displays, or 3-D sound systems. CyberSpeed is compatible with Creative Labs' 3D Blaster card, while Locus supports Forte's VFX1 HeadGear, Virtual i-O's Virtual i-glasses, and VictorMaxx's CyberMaxx head-mounted displays.

Only a few games are optimized for a wide range of add-on hardware. Interplay's Descend gets high marks for supporting the most PC devices. Descend and another Interplay game, Stonekeep, are pioneers of 3-D sound. They each use encoded Spatializer 3-D audio processing to create dramatic sound effects.

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# 3-D Takes Shape

If 1996 is to go down as the year of 3-D for PCs, all of today's new innovations and improvements have to rest on a firm foundation of industry standards. The standards that do exist, like Microsoft's APIs for Windows 95 and VRML on the World Wide Web, have made progress swift and sure on those platforms.

Proprietary 3-D technologies such as graphics and sound cards, however, will see much duplication of effort as designers keep reinventing the wheel. At least one more generation of 3-D chips and displays will debut between now and the end of the year, at which time audio and video standards should begin to emerge.

The good news is that in the meantime, 3-D peripherals will grow in power and features, new input and output devices will emerge, and old products will take on entirely new functions. This is especially true with conventional displays and input devices. Expect startling innovation in these areas throughout the year.

On the software side, Microsoft is promoting Silicon Graphics' OpenGL standard by offering it as a Windows 95 API, a programmer's utility that will speed development, improve performance, and provide

device independence for software running with Plug and Play add-on cards. Another Microsoft API, Direct 3D, should do for affordable 3-D graphics what OpenGL has done for high-end CAD.

Should you invest in 3-D technology knowing that some standards will change? Before you decide, consider the benefits of enlivening your Web page or business presentations, as well as the realism you'll gain from rendering your designs, schematics, and plans in three dimensions.

Another compelling consideration is cost. Prices of 3-D technologies have fallen faster than in any other area of personal computing over the last year—many of the most innovative products already cost well under \$500. With PC hardware and peripherals certain to continue their march toward value and performance, this could well be the year to bring your PC into the next dimension.

STEVE DITLEA is a contributing writer for Upside Magazine. He first reported on virtual reality for PC Computing in 1987.

## RESOURCES WHERE TO FIND 3-D PRODUCTS

**3D Blaster** / Creative Labs / (800) 998-1000 / \$349 est. street price / Reader Service No. 740

**3Demon** / Omnicomp Graphics / (800) 995-6864 / \$1,995 est. street price / Reader Service No. 741

**3D F/X** / Asymetrix / (800) 448-6543 / \$79 est. street price / Reader Service No. 742

**3D Kitchen** / Books That Work / (800) 242-4546 / \$49 est. street price / Reader Service No. 743

**3-D Magic** / 3DTV Corp. / (415) 479-3516 / \$169 est. street price / Reader Service No. 744

**3D Sound Series 140** / Crystal Lake Multimedia / (603) 222-2603 / \$249 est. street price / Reader Service No. 745

**3-D Studio Max** / Autodesk / (800) 964-6432 / \$3,495 est. street price / Reader Service No. 746

**CorelDraw 6** / Corel Corp. / (800) 772-6735 / \$450 est. street price / Reader Service No. 747

**CyberGlove** / Virtual Technologies / (415) 321-4900 / \$169 est. street price / Reader Service No. 748

**CyberMaxx 2.0** / VictorMaxx Technologies / (800) 815-6299 / \$799 est. street price / Reader Service No. 749

**CyberSpeed** / Mindspace / (800) 234-3088 / \$50 est. street price / Reader Service No. 750

**Descent** / Interplay / (800) 468-3775 / \$35 est. street price / Reader Service No. 751

**Edge 3D** / Diamond Multimedia / (408) 325-7000 / from \$269 est. street price / Reader Service No. 752

**Extreme 3D** / Macromedia / (800) 326-2128 / \$499 est. street price / Reader Service No. 753

**Home PC Game Glasses** / NuVision Technologies / (603) 814-9000 / \$79 est. street price / Reader Service No. 754

**Imager LCS-9210** / Labtec / (360) 896-2000 / \$60 est. street price / Reader Service No. 754

**Instant 3D** / Visual Software / (800) 881-4108 / \$49 est. street price / Reader Service No. 755

**Locus** / GT Interactive / (212) 726-6800 / \$50 est. street price / Reader Service No. 756

**Magellan** / Logitech / (800) 231-7717 / \$850 est. street price / Reader Service No. 757

**Ray Dream Studio** / Ray Dream / (800) 846-0111 / \$299 est. street price / Reader Service No. 759

**Sapphire 3D Designer** / Fujitsu Microelectronics / (800) 558-2494 / \$695 est. street price / Reader Service No. 760

**SimulEyes VR** / StereoGraphics / (800) 746-3937 / \$139 est. street price / Reader Service No. 761

**Softimage 3D** / Microsoft Corp. / (206) 882-8090 / \$7,995 est. street price / Reader Service No. 762

**Sound Blaster Awe32 Plug and Play** / Creative Labs / (800) 998-1000 / \$249 est. street price / Reader Service No. 763

**Spatializer HTMS-2510** / Spatializer / (800) 470-7281 / \$250 est. street price / Reader Service No. 764

**Stonekeep** / Interplay / (800) 468-3775 / \$50 est. street price / Reader Service No. 765

**Superscape VRT** / Superscape / (415) 812-9380 / \$3,995 est. street price / Reader Service No. 766

**VFX1 HeadGear** / Forte Technologies / (800) 436-7838 / \$999 est. street price / Reader Service No. 767

**Virtual i-glasses** / Virtual i-O / (800) 646-3759 / \$799 est. street price / Reader Service No. 768

**VRcreator** / Vream / (312) 477-4925 / \$449 est. street price / Reader Service No. 769

**VR Workshop+** / Media Synergy / (800) 793-6320 / \$40 est. street price / Reader Service No. 770

**WalkThrough Pro 2.5** / Virtus / (800) 847-8871 / \$395 est. street price / Reader Service No. 771

**WorldToolKit** / Sense8 Corp. / (415) 331-6318 / \$895 est. street price / Reader Service No. 772



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# Windows 95 BUYERS' GUIDE

## In This Issue:

- Quarterdeck QEMM 8 ● Media Synergy VR Workshop+
- Humanagement me2 ● FTP Software Mariner ● ABSI Skyway
- MicroHelp UnInstaller 3 ● Jian AgreementBuilder 3.0
- Learn To Do Windows 95 ● Quarterdeck WinProbe 4
- Rand McNally StreetFinder ● Adams Resumes & Cover Letters
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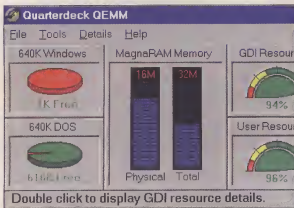
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VR Workshop+ consists of several parts, beginning with an easy-to-use spaceship control panel that fires you

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QEMM includes three main features. MagnaRAM gives you more available Windows memory so you can run more programs and open larger data files. This memory saving is gained by compressing data both in RAM and on the hard disk. Manifest, a memory reporting utility, offers detailed information about where in memory your system hardware configurations and operating systems reside. From the Manifest text editor, you can easily review and edit your DOS and Windows configuration files. The Optimize feature determines the most efficient way to allocate your PC's memory.

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## FILEBOX

## QEMM 8

**Pros:** Three powerful memory-management utilities in one.

**Cons:** Online help could use some beefing up.

**Verdict:** A great way to manage your system's memory when you're pinched for silicon.

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## FILEBOX

## VR Workshop+

**Pros:** An inexpensive and unique collection of 3-D animation tools.

**Cons:** Could offer more hand-holding for rookie multimedia creators.

**Verdict:** An easy and affordable introduction to 3-D animation.

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off to whatever part of the suite you choose. Central to the program is a module called VR Composer, an onscreen production studio for creating, animating, and customizing graphics. VR Gallery is a library of 120 royalty-free objects from which you can draw to create a virtual-reality world. VR Expo is a collection of demos and ads built with the program to give you an idea of what the program can do. 3D Pro is an incredibly easy 3-D drawing tool that uses real-time rendering so you can see the object or effect you're trying to produce instantly.

If you're in search of a package that will help you create high-end 3-D animations, VR Workshop+ won't replace Macromedia's \$699 Extreme 3D. But for \$45, it isn't meant to. VR Workshop+ gives you a good introduction to the world beyond two dimensions.

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business heading and ZIP codes in Select Phone, the #1-selling Phonebook on CD-ROM. Then he exports the list to Select Street Atlas, which automatically plots and displays these salons as close as a stunning ten feet of their actual locations. From there it's a few easy clicks to divide up the territory for his sales force. "We use Select Street Atlas and Select Phone to locate new accounts and route our salespeople. It's simply amazing."

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thousands of living things rely on Evergreen's technicians for their food and water. That's because Evergreen designs, installs and maintains indoor landscapes for hundreds of clients. Like a doctor's medical records, each site requires a file to track and monitor plant health. And one important component of the file? A street-level map detailing where the client site is located. So when technicians pick up their daily rounds, there's never any problems finding the patients. Says Richard, "Everyone should use Select Street for routing deliveries – the time savings are simply incredible."

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This is Veny Musum, Regional Vice-President of John Paul Mitchell Systems.



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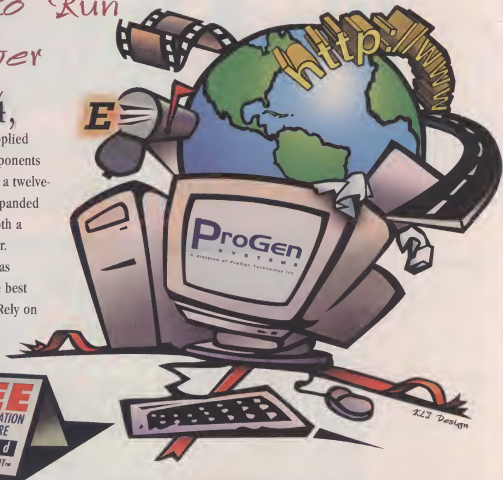
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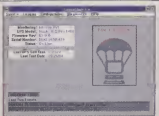
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## INTERNET STARTER KIT

## Skyway

If you're still waiting to take the Internet plunge, then pick up a copy of ABSI's Skyway and wait no more. Skyway includes everything newbies need to get started, including software, service, and a 45-minute Internet tour and training video.

ABSI bills Skyway as "the ultimate Internet adventure." But while Skyway's Enhanced Mosaic 2.1+ is a capable browser, it doesn't match all the advanced features of Netscape's Navigator 2.0.



## SYSTEM UTILITY

## UnInstaller 3

If Windows 95 ships with its own utility for uninstalling old applications, why shell out money for an extra utility that does the same thing? Unfortunately, not all programs support the Windows 95 uninstaller yet—especially Windows 3.1 apps. MicroHelp's UnInstaller 3 steps in where Windows 95 leaves off.

The 32-bit upgrade of UnInstaller does a few things well and some things incompletely. And when UnInstaller does something well, it does it slowly. The database it

One of your first Net newbie tasks is finding an Internet service provider (ISP). Skyway simplifies your choice by providing a list of over 200 ISPs based on your zip code. Skyway also lets every member of your household have their own account. Parents will appreciate Cyber Patrol, the parental-control software that's included, which keeps track of which sites your kids access and when.

Skyway also includes a semi-integrated suite of Internet tools, including Eudora Light for e-mail, News Xpress for newsgroups, and Lview Light for basic picture-editing and -viewing. There's also a simple Internet Relay Chat program and basic Telnet, FTP, and other Internet utilities. Most of the programs included in Skyway are available as freeware or shareware online. Skyway simply packages them and tosses in a helpful video and easy ISP setup.

RICH SCHWERIN

## FILEBOX

## Skyway

**Pros:** Hand-holding video initiates the Internet-phobic.

**Cons:** Ships with Mosaic's Web browser instead of Netscape's market-leading Navigator.

**Verdict:** Decent all-inclusive starter package for first-time Internet users.

\$49 est. street price  
ABSI  
(800) 748-5305, (801) 565-0475  
Reader Service No. 855

## FILEBOX

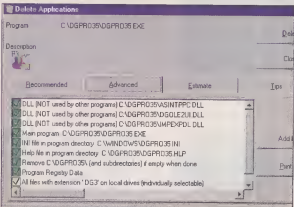
## Uninstaller 3

**Pros:** A safe way to sweep old Windows 3.1 applications off your hard drive.

**Cons:** It's slow and overlooks some files.

**Verdict:** A capable and affordable uninstaller—but it could be more thorough.

\$40 est. street price  
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(800) 777-3322, (770) 516-0899  
Reader Service No. 856



generates (a SmartLinks file) is a complete system profile that takes several minutes to build and just as long to update.

If your hard drive is overloaded with Windows 3.1 programs that you're looking to clear off, the Windows Cleanup, INI-Clean, and Duplicate File Finder features make easy work of removing most of the traces of these files. In

our tests UnInstaller 3 overlooked some program detritus, leaving behind the desktop icons and some INI file references that belonged to apps marked for deletion.

Removing Windows apps was cumbersome and slow. Quarterdeck's CleanSweep 95 does a better job of brushing away old apps and walking you through the process.

Bottom line: UnInstaller 3 is easy to use and does a reasonably good job of cleaning up after old apps. However, CleanSweep 95 is a faster, more reliable uninstaller.

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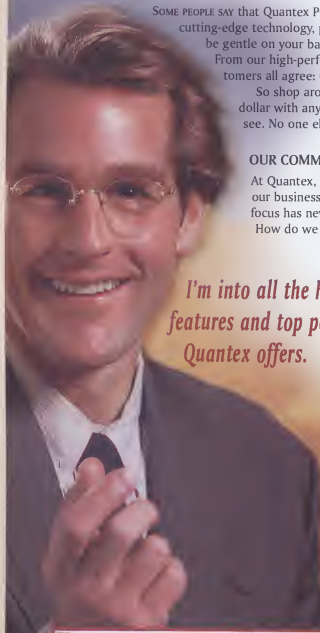
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- Ensoniq 16-Bit Wavetable Sound Card
- Altec Lansing ACS-5 Speakers
- Mini-Tower Case
- 104-Key keyboard & Microsoft Mouse
- Windows 95 with Microsoft Plus!
- Family Software Bundle (preinstalled)

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| QP5/133 M-3..... | \$2049 |
| QP5/150 M-3..... | \$2149 |
| QP5/166 M-3..... | \$2299 |

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- 17" 26dp MAG 1280x1024 Monitor
- 28.8 Fax/Modem w/Voice Mail & Speakerphone
- 8X EIDE Ultra-Fast CD-ROM Drive
- Ensoniq 16-Bit Wavetable Sound Card
- Altec Lansing ACS-31 Speakers w/Subwoofer
- Mini-Tower Case
- 104-Key keyboard & Microsoft Mouse
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| QP5/120 M-4..... | \$2349 |
| QP5/150 M-4..... | \$2499 |
| QP5/166 M-4..... | \$2649 |

## QP6/200 SM-2 \$3599

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- 256KB Internal L2 Cache
- 2.5GB EIDE Mode 4 Hard Drive
- 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- Diamond Stealth64 PCI Video w/2MB VRAM
- 17" 25dp MAG Technitron Monitor (Based on Advanced Sony Trinitron CRT)
- 28.8 fax/modem w/voice mail & speakerphone
- 8X EIDE Ultra-Fast CD-ROM Drive
- Ensoniq 16-Bit Wavetable Sound Card
- Altec Lansing ACS-31 Speakers w/ subwoofer
- Mid-Tower Case
- 104-Key keyboard & Microsoft Mouse
- Windows 95 with Microsoft Plus!
- Professional Software Bundle (preinstalled)

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|-------------------|--------|
| QP6/150 SM-2..... | \$3299 |
| QP6/180 SM-2..... | \$3399 |

## QP6/200 WS-2 \$5199

- Intel 200MHz Pentium Pro processor
- 32MB RAM
- 256KB Internal L2 Cache
- 4GB Fast Wide SCSI Hard Drive
- 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- Adaptec 2940W PQ Wide SCSI Controller
- Diamond Stealth64 PCI w/4MB VRAM
- 21" 28dp MAG 1600x1280 Monitor
- Toshiba 6.7X SCSI CD-ROM Drive
- ATX Tower Case
- MS Natural Keyboard
- Microsoft Mouse
- MS Windows NT Workstation 3.51
- 3-Year Warranty\*
- Upgrade to 64MB RAM for \$600 more

|                   |         |
|-------------------|---------|
| QP6/150 WS-2..... | \$ 4799 |
| QP6/180 WS-2..... | \$ 4949 |

## Family Software Bundle

- Novell PerfectHome: PerfectWorks; Memphis Math; Write With Me; InfoCentral; Grammatik; Clip Art for the Home; Clip Art for the Office; Read With Me 1 & 2; PerfectWorks for Kids
- Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia
- Complete Reference Library (over 10 titles)
- Al Unser Jr. Arcade Racing
- USS Ticonderoga
- Animals II
- How Your Body Works
- Quicken Financial Manager-SE
- EveryWhere USA Travel Guide
- America Online, Prodigy, CompuServe (one month trial membership to on-line services)
- NetCruiser Plus (Free Internet Access of over 400 hours for one month)
- Microsoft Internet Explorer 2.0

## Professional Software Bundle

- Novell PerfectOffice: WordPerfect 6.1; Quattro Pro 6.0; Envoy; InfoCentral; Presentations GroupWise
- Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia
- Complete Reference Library (over 10 titles included)
- SharkWare (The best way to manage your Contacts, Calendar, Phone Calls and To-Do list)
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- USS Ticonderoga
- America Online, Prodigy, CompuServe (one month trial membership to on-line services)
- NetCruiser Plus (Free Internet Access of over 400 hours for one month)
- Microsoft Internet Explorer 2.0

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## LEGAL ASSISTANCE

# AgreementBuilder 3.0

No matter how trivial it seems, when you make an agreement with someone, it's best to make it official with a signature. That's the idea behind Jian's AgreementBuilder 3.0. It's not a stand-alone application but a collection of text documents: Just fill in the blanks to make those important contracts official.

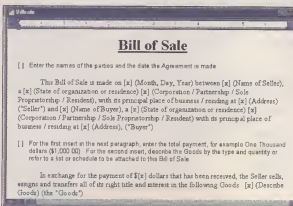
AgreementBuilder includes over 100 contracts, including Bill of Sale, Equipment Lease, Copyrighting, and Limited Partnership. AgreementBuilder is straightforward: All the

notes and areas where you need to enter information are shown in color—as long as you're using a compatible word processor, such as Microsoft's Word, Corel's WordPerfect, or Lotus's Word Pro.

Although the software brags about "plain English contracts," most are couched in heavy-handed legalese. And you won't find any electronic help files to clear up the scariest terms. The manual includes a basic glossary and synopsis of what each contract is for, but we'd like to see that information online.

For complex and really important contracts, AgreementBuilder won't replace a lawyer (the publisher recommends that you seek legal counsel). But while AgreementBuilder won't replace your attorney, it may just keep your costs down: With a draft contract in hand, your lawyer might not feel obliged to charge so much for services.

JACK LYON



## FILEBOX

## AgreementBuilder 3.0

**Pros:** Creating contracts is child's play.

**Cons:** No online information on what your contracts and related terms mean.

**Verdict:** AgreementBuilder covers only the basics for simple, low-cost contracts.

\$90 est. street price  
Jian  
(800) 762-2413, (415) 254-5600  
Reader Service No. 877

## TRAINING CD-ROM

# Learn To Do Windows 95

You finally mastered Windows 3.1, but now there's an entirely new operating system on your PC. Where do you start? The Microsoft Windows 95 CD Tour barely scratches the surface, and searching the online help files every time you need guidance grows tiresome. Instead, spend a few bucks and check out Allegro New Media's Learn To Do Windows 95 with John C. Dvorak. It promises to teach you the basics in two hours or less.

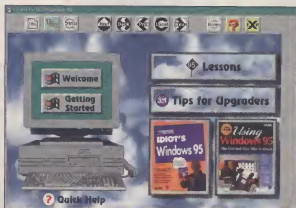
Learn To Do Windows 95 is an interactive, multimedia

CD-ROM that features comprehensive lessons and tips for Windows 95. For Windows 3.1 users, a section called the Windows 3.1 Attic shows how to make the transition to Windows 95.

The lessons and tips are accompanied by more than two hours' worth of video and audio instructions. You'll also find "Try Me" links to Windows 95 applets, to practice as you learn. And for those who hunger for more reference material, the complete text of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Windows 95* and *Using Windows 95* are included, and every lesson is linked to the appropriate sections of these books.

The only oversight of Learn To Do Windows 95 is the lack of progressive flow between lessons. However, with its enjoyable and interactive multimedia, this CD is a great tool for mastering the new operating system.

LULIT BEZUAYEHU



## FILEBOX

## Learn To Do Windows 95 with John C. Dvorak

**Pros:** Highly interactive; covers all the bases.

**Cons:** Needs more flow between lessons.

**Verdict:** A great tool for mastering Windows 95.

\$30 est. street price  
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(201) 808-1992  
Reader Service No. 858



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Available at your local software store.  
MicroHelp is at [www.microhelp.com](http://www.microhelp.com)

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Dell's featured computer artist is Marco Marinucci of San Francisco, CA.

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PC Magazine March 12, '96

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## WINDOWS UTILITY

## WinProbe 4

Since Windows 95 makes it so easy to get a PC running, what's a computer nerd to do? Install Quarterdeck's WinProbe 4, for starters. If you want total control over your PC's hardware and software, and if you miss mainframe consoles filled with more blinking lights than the bridge of the USS *Enterprise*, this is the system diagnostics utility for you.

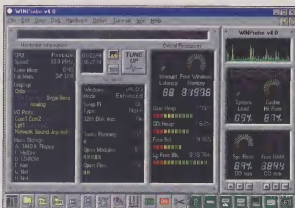
WinProbe's most impressive (and daunting) feature is its Status Panel, which gives you information at a glance on

dozens of aspects of system performance, including memory and hard drive usage, system resources, tasks running, device drivers and hardware installed, and CMOS settings. Extensive diagnostic features help you pinpoint problems and optimize performance by, for example, freeing up memory and eliminating interrupt conflicts.

But the status panel is complicated and can be intimidating to all but the most experienced PC users. And WinProbe lacks context-sensitive help, which doesn't make it any easier. In many cases, the diagnostic and optimization routines suggest changes but don't tell you how to perform them.

WinProbe 4 is a 16-bit utility that will be most useful to Windows 3.1 users, but its features are relevant to Windows 95 users as well. Version 5, due out later this year, will be optimized for Windows 95.

DYLAN TWENEY



## FILEBOX

## WinProbe 4

**Pros:** Provides detailed system information and diagnostics.

**Cons:** The status panel is nearly inscrutable; the program is best suited for Windows 3.1 users.

**Verdict:** Tells all you need to know about your system.

\$50 est. street price  
Quarterdeck Corp.  
(800) 683-6696, (310) 309-3700  
Reader Service No. 843

## CD-ROM STREET ATLAS

## StreetFinder 1996

Hate getting lost? Too cool to ask for directions? Then plot your course in advance with Rand McNally's StreetFinder 1996, which covers all the streets in every U.S. state except Alaska.

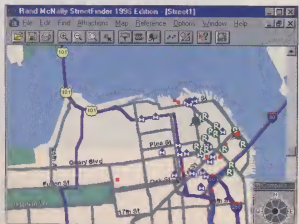
StreetFinder packs more than 6 million street miles onto two CD-ROMs. You can locate any urban or rural address instantly and plot its location on a detailed, up-to-date Rand McNally map. Not sure of a particular address? You can

also search for intersections, cities, zip codes, and even telephone area codes.

You'll find thousands of attractions mapped on StreetFinder, including hotels, restaurants, museums, and historical sites. But if you're planning a family vacation or road trip, Rand McNally's TripMaker 1996 is a more powerful program (see "TripMaker 1996 Edition," December 1995, page 254); StreetFinder is better for locating addresses. The two products work in tandem, but, unfortunately, are sold separately rather than as a low-cost suite.

Unless you have a multimedia laptop in your car, you'll have to find your destination on StreetFinder first, then print the map to take with you. This is fine if you can plan all of your travels in advance, but what if you need map access while driving? That's where traditional glove-box road maps have StreetFinder beat.

RICH SCHWERN



## FILEBOX

## StreetFinder 1996

**Pros:** Unless you live in Alaska, StreetFinder maps every U.S. street you've ever tried to find.

**Cons:** Better plan ahead, unless you have a CD-ROM drive in your car.

**Verdict:** Comprehensive and easy-to-use street maps.

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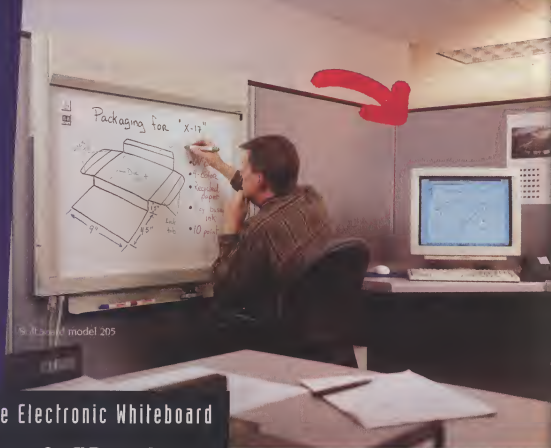
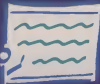
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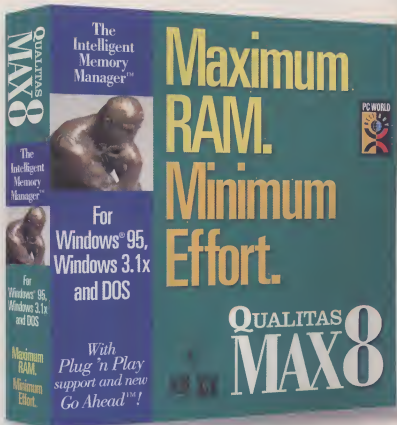
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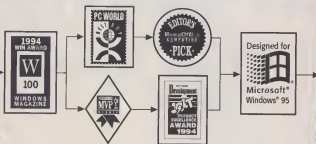
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ext.C32 today. Since you get Visio for both Windows 3.1 and Windows 95, it's the smartest move you can make.



# CDestined to Burn



**CDMaster™** from Turtle Beach is an internal 2X record/4X play CD drive that lets you master your own CD's, right on your desktop. Everything you need to master Compact Discs, create backups and produce copies for distribution is right in the box — CD recordable drive, SCSI-2 controller, software... even five blank CD's to get you started.

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## JOB HUNTING

# Adams Resumes

Conventional wisdom says it takes 6 months and 100 résumés per week to find a new job after being laid off. That's 2,400 résumés, the same number of customized cover letters, and a ton of work. Adams Resumes & Cover Letters helps you cut back on effort but still stay hot on the job trail.

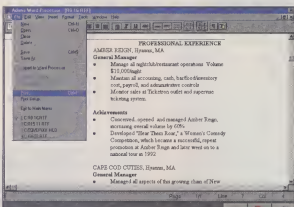
With the FastResume and FastLetter components, you can create customized résumés and cover letters in a matter of minutes. Simply type in your career and education

details, sit back, and let the software do the rest.

You'll find a menu of suggestions that keeps the ideas flowing each step of the way. If you get stuck, instructive tutorials walk you through the entire job-application process, offering advice on everything from tracking down contacts to avoiding interview gaffes. Of course, the software includes hundreds of sample résumés and cover

letters, all of which you can adapt to suit your needs.

Adams Resumes & Cover Letters also includes an address book and diary—a nice touch that makes it easy to keep in touch with your contacts. Got a fax modem and Windows 95? Send your résumé without ever leaving the package. You can also receive free access to the Adams JobBank Online database, which includes a career center and listings of more than 2,000 current openings. **LEANDER KAHNEY**



## FILEBOX

## Adams Resumes & Cover Letters

**Pros:** Makes it easy to craft custom cover letters and résumés.

**Cons:** Much of the job advice is too conservative.

**Verdict:** For jump-starting the job-search process, it's money well spent.

\$30 est. street price  
Adams Media Corp.  
(800) 872-5627, (617) 767-8100  
Reader Service No. 845

## INTERNET ACCESS

# CyberSitter 2.0

It's three o'clock in the afternoon on the Web—do you know where your kids are surfing? With Solid Oak Software's CyberSitter 2.0, you can find out which sites they're visiting and decide where you don't want them to go when you can't supervise them.

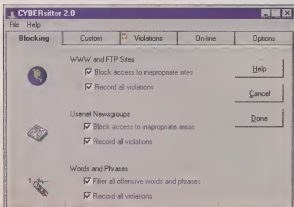
CyberSitter runs unobtrusively in the background during online sessions, and monitors and limits children's access to objectionable material on the Internet. You can set it up in order to block access to sites or simply alert you when your

kids try to visit certain sites.

CyberSitter comes with a predefined list of Web sites, newsgroups, chat areas, and catchwords that might not be suitable for children. You can also create a custom list of sites that you don't want your children to visit.

If CyberSitter senses someone trying to visit a restricted site or newsgroup, it blocks the system from going to that location. You can even set up CyberSitter to maintain a history of all the sites you or your kids have visited. A password-protection feature lets you customize your blocking options and makes it impossible for even the most precocious children to deactivate or defeat.

Although it's no substitute for surfing with your children, CyberSitter 2.0 is a great tool for parents. It's the best way to keep tabs on your kids' online time when you can't be there yourself. **LULIT BEZUAYEHU**



## FILEBOX

## CyberSitter 2.0

**Pros:** Easy to install and run; lets you customize password-protected lists of objectionable Internet sites.

**Cons:** Documentation is short on how-to information.

**Verdict:** The perfect babysitter for your kids when they venture into cyberspace.

\$40 est. street price  
Solid Oak Software  
(800) 388-2761, (805) 892-2550  
Reader Service No. 846



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- **Austin Power System Desktops:**  
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THE BIG SCREEN STORY OF A MOBILE TITAN

## Austin Edge CD Notebook Standard Features:

Intel 430MX PCI Bus  
Internal 3.5" Removable Diskette Drive,  
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32-Bit Local Bus Fast IDE  
256K Pipeline Burst L2 Cache  
16-Bit Stereo Business Audio  
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External Jacks for Line-In/Line-Out  
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Win '95 Plug n' Play BIOS  
Windows® 95 Pre-Installed



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The name says it all. **The Edge.** The Austin Edge. As soon as you watch it perform, you'll know this notebook gives you The Competitive Edge. It builds the foundation of its performance package on the Intel 430MX Chipset and includes high-end features like 256KB Pipeline Burst L2 Cache.

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The Edge comes in an impressive package, weighing just 6.8 lbs with the CD-ROM and battery. It's covered by a money-back guarantee and a one-year parts and labor warranty. Call Austin, and **travel with confidence.**

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Intel 430MX PCI Bus  
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Win '95 Plug n' Play BIOS  
Windows 95 Pre-Installed

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32-Bit PCI Video - 2MB  
4X Internal CD-ROM  
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Business Lease: **\$135 / month**  
**\$3,535**

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(Removable for optional second battery)  
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## Batteries: The Lithium Ion Advantage



"Lithium Ion batteries will give you 2 hours or more of continuous usage, even with a fully-loaded notebook. This compares with only 60 to 90 minutes for nickel-hydrate batteries."

Source:  
PC Magazine, July 1995

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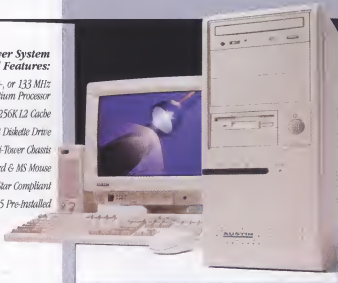


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Standard Features:**

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Desktop or Mini-Tower Chassis  
Win '95 Keyboard & MS Mouse  
Energy-Star Compliant  
Windows '95 Pre-Installed



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With the **Power System 100**, Austin combines Pentium performance and incredible value. And **PowerPLUS** systems come with a host of features, including a choice of processors ranging from 100- to 166 MHz and 256KB L2 Write-Back Cache, as well as RAM capability up to 128MB.

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We have systems ready to ship, and we offer almost endless configuration options, with software and peripherals that will make your Austin computer *the ideal working partner*.

**Austin Power System 100**

8MB RAM (expandable to 128MB)  
850MB Enhanced IDE Hard Drive  
64-Bit PCI Video Accelerator - 1MB  
15" .28mm NI SVGA Monitor  
Business Lease: **\$58 / month**  
**\$1,499**  
133MHz processor - add \$125

**Austin PowerPLUS-133**

16MB EDO RAM (expandable to 128MB)  
256KB L2 Pipeline Burst Cache  
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6X IDE CD-ROM Drive  
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**Austin PowerPLUS System  
Standard Features:**

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# AUSTIN SYSTEMS FOR BIG PICTURE

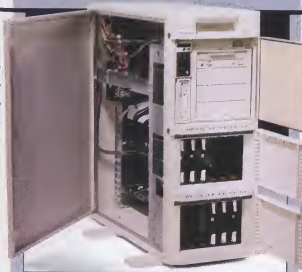
## AUSTIN DEPARTMENTAL SERVERS

### Austin Affinity XR Server Standard Features:

256K L2 Cache  
Adaptec 2940W Drive Controller  
4X SCSI CD-ROM Drive  
16 Bit ISA Video  
3.5" 1.44MB Diskette Drive  
10Base-T PCI Network Adapter  
3 ISA, 3 PCI Expansion Slots  
Tower Chassis (26"H x 10" W x 25.5"D)  
300W Power Supply  
101-Key Keyboard  
Three-Year Parts & Labor Warranty  
One-Year On-Site Service

### Austin Affinity XE and XE Pro Standard Features:

512K L2 Cache  
Mylex PCI RAID Controller  
4X SCSI CD-ROM Drive  
3.5" 1.44MB Diskette Drive  
16-Bit ISA Video  
100Base-T PCI Network Adapter  
Affinity XE: 6 ISA, 4 PCI Expansion Slots  
Affinity XE Pro: 4 ISA, 6 PCI Expansion Slots  
Tower Chassis (26"H x 10" W x 25.5"D)  
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Mylex Array Management Software and  
Austin's Novell NetWare Pre-Installed



### Austin XE Pro Serves Up More Power

Expect more performance from an Austin Affinity XE Pro server, with quad **150-, 180-, or 200MHz Pentium Pro Processors**. The Affinity provides a powerful, reliable server for your department's database or application server. And as your organization grows, you can upgrade the expandable Affinity server to accommodate all your increased demands.

### An Affinity for Success

Austin gives you a choice in the Affinity server line, with the Austin Affinity XR, the Affinity XE, and the Affinity XE Pro. For maximum flexibility, the Affinity chassis is designed with up to 12 hot-swappable 2GB, 7200RPM hard drives and an enhanced, nine-fan cooling system. Each Affinity server offers easy access to internal components and comes complete **with advanced server management software**.

### Austin Affinity XR-133

120MHz Intel Pentium Processor  
16MB RAM - Expandable to 512MB  
2GB Hot-Swappable Fast & Wide SCA Hard Drive - Expandable to 12GB  
Business Lease: \$146 / month  
**\$3,995**

### Austin Affinity XE-150

150MHz Dual Pentium Processor  
64MB RAM - Expandable to 512MB  
3 2GB Hot-Swappable Fast & Wide SCA Hard Drives Expandable to 24GB  
Business Lease: \$424 / month  
**\$11,995**

### Austin Affinity XE-Pro

180MHz Dual Pentium Processor  
128MB RAM - Expandable to 1GB  
5-2GB Hot-Swappable Fast & Wide SCA Hard Drive - Expandable to 24GB  
Business Lease: \$694 / month  
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Circle 152 on reader service card.



## PERSONAL INFORMATION UTILITY

## Post-it Software Notes

Are the edges of your monitor covered with yellow Post-it notes? 3M's Post-it Software Notes delivers the same jot-it-down convenience as the paper reminders, but stashes them electronically so it's easier to organize them.

The premise of the software is familiar: A small pad sits on your screen. When you need to write down something, click on the pad and a "sticky" note pops onto your screen. You can shrink the note onscreen or drag it onto

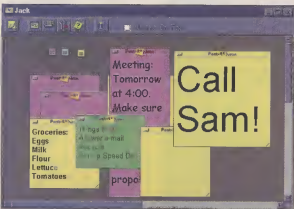
the software's memo board. It's also completely customizable, letting you save notes either on your desktop or on the software's own corkboard. The program also lets you attach alarms to notes and search for words in the text.

If you're using Microsoft's Exchange or Mail, or Lotus's cc:Mail, you can even send notes as e-mail. In addition, you can export notes into plain-text files.

One shortcoming: Post-it Software Notes ignores a few Windows interface standards. Clicking on the upper-right corner of a note, for example, doesn't close the note—it opens a File menu.

Minor quirks aside, Post-it Software Notes is a useful little utility. With its added organizational, alarm, and e-mail capabilities, it's a fine low-priced alternative to the paper Post-it notes on your monitor.

JACK LYON



## FILEBOX

### Post-it Software Notes

**Pros:** Creates paperless Post-it notes that support alarms, e-mail, and searching.

**Cons:** Still not as fast as paper Post-its.

**Verdict:** A simple way to jot down notes electronically.

\$20 est. street price  
3M  
(800) 364-3577, (612) 737-8501  
Reader Service No. 847

## SYSTEM UTILITY

## First Aid 95

You're helpless: Your computer locks up, a critical application won't launch, or your document won't print. CyberMedia's First Aid 95 is designed to fix annoying Windows problems ranging from poor system performance to total lockups.

Working with First Aid 95 seems easy—at first. The interface is well designed, and you'll find every option right at your fingertips. To stump First Aid, we loaded up a system to

test the program's features, including Fix Applications, Fix Online/Network, Clean Windows, Trim Applications, and Tune Up PC.

Right off the bat we were disappointed. We expected First Aid to scan our system and know what applications we had installed. It didn't. Instead, we had to select our applications from a list. Our test system suffered a nasty case of cross-linked files that affected two applications. But First Aid didn't discover any problems when we ran the Fix Applications module.

When we tried fixing online and network configurations, First Aid reported that no modem driver was installed. But in fact, the internal 28.8Kbps modem was working perfectly. Clean Windows reported three problems, but First Aid was unable to fix them automatically.

If your system needs tweaking, look elsewhere. We can't guarantee First Aid 95 will rescue you.

ADAM MEYERSON



## FILEBOX

### First Aid 95

**Pros:** The Trim Applications feature frees up megabytes of valuable disk space.

**Cons:** Unable to find or fix many common problems.

**Verdict:** A good-looking program that lacks useful substance.

\$50 est. street price  
CyberMedia  
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Reader Service No. 852

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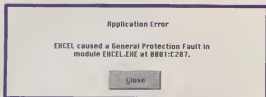
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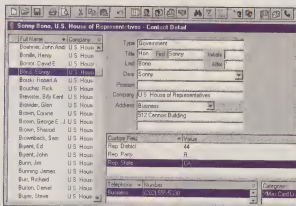
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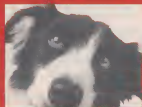
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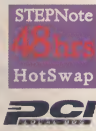
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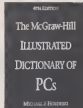
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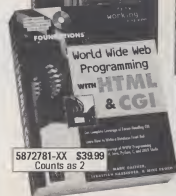
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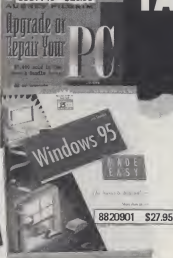
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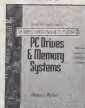
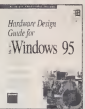
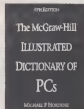


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### First Source International, Inc. Past, Present, Future

First Source International, Inc. (FSI) was conceived in February of 1990. Originally called "The Source", the company business plan was developed over pizza in Irvine, California. At that time, founders Bob, Doug, and John determined that there was a demand for a direct marketing company specializing in memory products and agreed on a simple goal: focus on quality of service, products and information, while offering the lowest possible prices! Based on that vision the company was formed.

The first FSI advertisement ran in April of 1990. With four employees, orders were processed and shipped from a 200 square foot executive suite. In those early days everyone pitched in with all aspects of the business from sales and customer service to shipping and delivery. Once the phones began ringing at a regular pace the partners took a chance and made the investment in additional ads, making FSI the first memory company to advertise in many publications. As it turned out, the advertising paid off and before long the company was moving into a larger facility and hiring more employees. FSI was a success!

Over the years, FSI has developed a database of configuration information unrivaled by it's competitors. Today the database contains information on over 3,500 different computers and printers, allowing FSI's salespeople to assist their customers in upgrading systems accurately and quickly without the risk of supplying incorrect or incompatible products.

It didn't take long before FSI's customers began asking for more than just memory. Although the original business plan had not included the possibility of being a full service computer products reseller, with thousands of loyal customers requesting different products on a daily basis it seemed like a logical progression. In 1993 FSI began offering processor upgrades, then modems,

then video cards, etc. By early 1995 every major computer hardware, software and peripheral product had been added to FSI's inventory, over 36,000 different items, including most major name brand computers and printers all selling for everyday discount prices, that are lower than even the computer superstores.

In 1995 First Source International was included in Inc. Magazine prestigious "Inc. 500", which is a complete list of America's fastest growing privately held companies and in 1996 was named among PC Computing magazines "Direct Top 60" and received a 4 star rating.

FSI recently expanded it's operations in a new facility located in Aliso Viejo, California and continues to service hundreds of thousands of customers each year with the same care that the original patrons received back in 1990.

If you would like to find out more about First Source International, the products they sell or sign up to receive a free catalog, call their toll free number, 1-800-770-9688 or stop by FSI's storefront on the Internet by pointing your browser to <http://www.firstsource.com>.



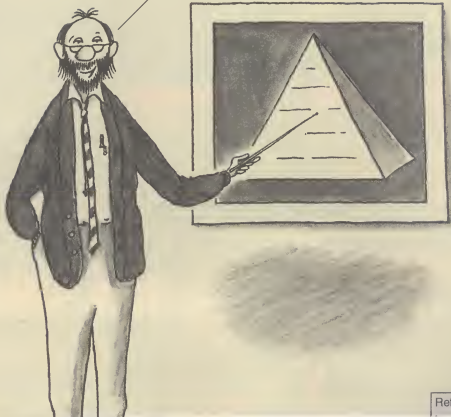
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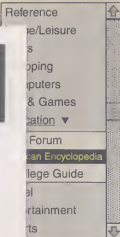
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# Spotlight on *Buying Direct*

## Direct Focus



### First Source International, Inc. Past, Present, Future

First Source International, Inc. (FSI) was conceived in February of 1990. Originally called "The Source", the company business plan was developed over pizza in Irvine, California. At that time, founders Bob, Doug, and John determined that there was a demand for a direct marketing company specializing in memory products and agreed on a simple goal: focus on quality of service, products and information, while offering the lowest possible prices! Based on that vision the company was formed.

The first FSI advertisement ran in April of 1990. With four employees, orders were processed and shipped from a 200 square foot executive suite. In those early days everyone pitched in with all aspects from sales and to shipping and ringing at a regular rate and made the first FSI the first merit publications. As time went off and before long a larger facility was a success!

Over the years the base of configuration competitors. Today on over 3,500 products, allowing FSI customers in up and quickly without incompatible pro-

It didn't take long before FSI's customers began asking for more than just memory. Although the original business plan had not included the possibility of being a full service computer products reseller, with thousands of loyal customers requesting different products on a daily basis it seemed like a logical progression. In 1993 FSI began offering processor upgrades, then modems, then video cards, etc. By early 1995 every major computer hardware, software and peripheral product had been added to FSI's inventory, over 36,000 different items, including most major name brand computers and printers all selling for everyday discount prices, that are lower than even the computer



Bob Snowden

Douglas Dreier

John Walsh

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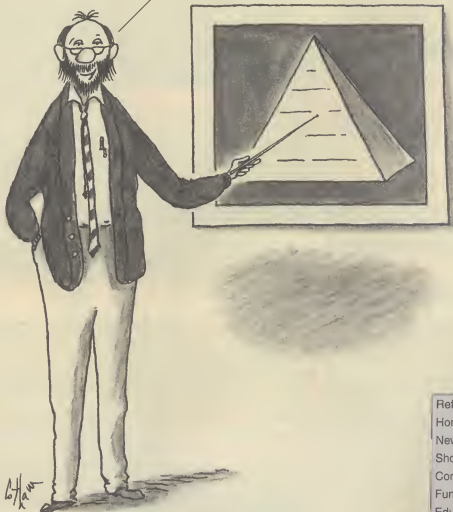
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### IBM APTIVE 256K CACHE MODULES \$79.00

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|---------|--------|-------|----------|
| 1x32-70 | 72 pin | 4Meg  | \$ 89.00 |
| 2x32-70 | 72 pin | 8Meg  | \$171.00 |
| 1x36-70 | 72 pin | 4Meg  | \$109.00 |
| 2x36-70 | 72 pin | 8Meg  | \$209.00 |
| 4x32-70 | 72 pin | 16Meg | \$334.00 |
| 4x36-70 | 72 pin | 16Meg | \$369.00 |

### CACHE MEMORY CACHE MODULES

|            | 12MS  | 15MS       | 20MS        | 25MS  |  |
|------------|-------|------------|-------------|-------|--|
| RAM        |       | 1.50       | 2.00        | 2.50  | 256K (160 per) Positive Burst Cache Module |
| 320K       | 14.00 | 4.00       | 4.00        | 7.00  | \$69.00                                    |
| 128K (3 D) | -     | 14.00      | 4.00        | -     |  |
| 640K       | -     | 11.00      | 8.00        | 6.00  | 112K (60 per) Positive Burst Cache Module  |
| 480K       | -     | 11.00      | 8.00        | 8.00  | \$119.00                                   |
| 640K       | -     | 10.00 (3V) | 10.00 (3 D) | -     |  |
| 128K       | -     | 8.00       | 7.00        | 4.00  | 256K (30 per) Async Cache Module           |
| 1280K      | -     | 29.00      | 29.00       | 24.00 | \$79.00                                    |



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## TOSHIBA



Portégé 610CT

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### Portégé 610CT

- Pentium 90MHz processor
- 9.5" True Color display for optimum color
- Built-in 16-bit sound (SoundBlaster Pro compatible), microphone and speaker
- Lithium Ion battery technology
- Integrated Accupoint for easy control

| Processor     | Screen          | RAM/HD  | Price  |
|---------------|-----------------|---------|--------|
| Pentium 90MHz | 9.5" True Color | 8/720MB | \$3939 |

### Tecra 700 and 720

- Pentium 120MHz & 133MHz processors
- PCI bus architecture (internal & external)
- 11.3", 800x600 high res. display (Tecra 700)
- 12.1", 1024x768 high res. display (Tecra 720)
- Built-in 28.8 fax/modem with speaker phone (Tecra 720 models only)
- Built-in 6X CD-ROM Drive (Tecra 720)
- Optional 4X CD-ROM Drive (Tecra 700)

| Processor   | Screen               | RAM/HD      | Price  |
|-------------|----------------------|-------------|--------|
| Pentium 120 | 11.3" Dual Scan SVGA | 8MB/1.13GB  | \$4679 |
| Pentium 120 | 11.3" Active SVGA    | 16MB/1.13GB | \$5949 |
| Pentium 133 | 12.1" Active SVGA    | 16MB/1.2GB  | 7469   |



Tecra 720

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BIG!  
11.3"  
or  
12.1"  
Display



Satellite Pro 410C

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### Satellite Pro 410

- Built-in 4X CD-ROM Drive (Swap Bays & CD-ROM) (Active model only - optional on Dual Scan)
- Built-in 16-bit sound, microphone, speaker & MIDI
- EDO RAM memory, expandable to 90MB
- Built-in AC adapter - small, sleek design & reduced weight
- Integrated Accupoint - small, accurate & easy to use
- Lithium Ion battery technology
- Built-in infrared for wireless communications

| Processor  | Screen          | RAM/HD  | Price  |
|------------|-----------------|---------|--------|
| Pentium 90 | 11.3" Dual Scan | 8/772MB | \$3199 |
| Pentium 90 | 11.3" Active    | 8/772MB | 4399   |

### Satellite 2130CS/100CS

| Processor  | Screen          | RAM/HD  | Price  |
|------------|-----------------|---------|--------|
| 486DX4/75  | 10.4" Dual Scan | 8/500MB | \$1599 |
| Pentium 75 | 10.4" Dual Scan | 8/500MB | 1969*  |
| *EDO RAM   |                 |         |        |



Satellite 2130CS/100CS

## IBM®



ThinkPad® 760LD

### ThinkPad® 760L and 760LD

- 10.4" Active display
- 32-bit accelerated Local bus video
- Built-in sound card, speakers & mic
- 256KB Level 2 cache
- New tilting keyboard with palm rest

| Processor  | Screen       | RAM/HD  | Price  |
|------------|--------------|---------|--------|
| Pentium 90 | 10.4" Active | 8/810MB | \$4249 |
| Pentium 90 | 10.4" Active | 8/810MB | 4549*  |

\* Includes built-in 4X CD-ROM drive  
Windows 95 models also available

### ThinkPad® 760

- Up to 120MHz Pentium with 32-bit Local bus
- 12.1" Active display with 600x600 resolution (selected models)
- 4X CD-ROM Drive, MPEG-2 support, & full motion video (ThinkPad 760C models only \*)
- Built-in 28.8 fax/modem
- SoundBlaster-compatible audio & telephony
- Lithium Ion battery technology

| Processor   | Screen       | RAM/HD    | Price  |
|-------------|--------------|-----------|--------|
| Pentium 90  | 10.4" Active | 8/720MB   | \$4999 |
| Pentium 90  | 12.1" Active | 8/720MB   | 5499   |
| Pentium 120 | 12.1" Active | 8MB/1.1GB | 5999   |
| Pentium 90  | 12.1" Active | 8MB/1.2GB | 6699*  |
| Pentium 120 | 12.1" Active | 8MB/1.2GB | 6899*  |



ThinkPad® 760

\* Features built-in 4X CD-ROM drive  
WIN 95 models available. Call for details.

## NEC

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**Value Series**  
**Versa 2205 \$2499**  
**Versa 550D \$1799**



NEC Versa 4000



### NEC Versa 4000

- Built-in CD-ROM Drive! (Standard on some models, optional on others)
- Up to 120MHz Pentium processors
- 256KB Level 2 Cache to optimize performance
- Unbelievable display - 65K color Dual Scan, 16.8 million color Active (High resolution Active Matrix displays available - 800x600 resolution)
- Built-in 16-bit sound, microphone, MIDI and 2 built-in speakers
- Multimedia docking station with outstanding Alice Lancing 4 speaker array (optional accessory, priced separately)

### NEW Models with 4X CD-ROM

| Processor   | Screen          | RAM/HD  | Price   |
|-------------|-----------------|---------|---------|
| Pentium 75  | 10.1" Active    | 8/810MB | \$3799† |
| Pentium 90  | 10.4" High Res. | 8/810MB | 4499    |
| Pentium 90  | 10.1" Active    | 8/810MB | 4499†   |
| Pentium 120 | 10.4" High Res. | 8MB/1GB | 4999    |

† Features built-in 4X CD-ROM drive

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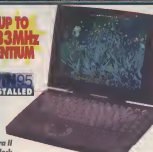
### Digital HiNote Ultra II

- Up to 133MHz mobile Pentium processors
- 256KB of internal level 2 cache memory
- Oversized 10.4" Active display
- 16mm trackball with sculpted palm rest

| Processor   | Screen            | RAM/HD    | Price  |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------|--------|
| Pentium 100 | 10.4" Active SVGA | 8MB/1.1GB | \$3769 |
| Pentium 120 | 10.4" Active SVGA | 8MB/1.1GB | 4059   |
| Pentium 133 | 10.4" Active SVGA | 8MB/1.1GB | 4439   |

**UP TO  
133MHz  
PENTIUM**

**WIN95  
INSTALLED**



HiNote Ultra II

Shown with optional floppy dock

### Digital HiNote VP

| Processor   | Screen          | RAM/HD  | Price  |
|-------------|-----------------|---------|--------|
| Pentium 75  | 10.4" Dual Scan | 8/540MB | \$1999 |
| Pentium 100 | 10.4" Dual Scan | 8/810MB | 2399   |
| Pentium 100 | 10.4" Active    | 8/810MB | 2979   |

\* Features EDO RAM memory



**HEWLETT  
PACKARD**

### HP OmniBook 600

- Weighs **ONLY 3.6 pounds!**
- Built-in 16-bit sound, microphone & speaker (Active model only)
- Built-in infrared for wireless communications
- Lithium ion battery technology (Active model only)
- Instant "ON" ready-to-work state — lasts for months at a charge

| Processor | Screen         | RAM/HD  | Price  |
|-----------|----------------|---------|--------|
| 486DX4/75 | 8.5" Dual Scan | 8/340MB | \$2200 |
| 486DX4/75 | 9.5" Active    | 8/340MB | 2500   |

### HP OmniBook 5500

- 133MHz Pentium with 32-bit PCI Local bus
- 12.1" Active Matrix display with 65,000 colors
- Super VGA-800x600 resolution on notebook
- PCI Local bus Video, 1.5MB video memory
- Instant "ON" capabilities
- Optional 4X CD-ROM available

| Processor   | Screen       | RAM/HD     | Price |
|-------------|--------------|------------|-------|
| Pentium 133 | 12.1" Active | 8MB/1.35GB | CALL  |

HP OmniBook 5500 Notebook PC



Authorized Reseller

**UP TO  
133MHz  
PENTIUM**



Ascentia P

### AST Ascentia P

- Pentium 100MHz and 133MHz processors
- Standard SmartBay — swap 4X CD-ROM, 3.5" floppy or optional 2nd battery
- 11.3" Dual Scan & Active display with 800x600 resolutions
- 800MB & 1.2GB removable hard drives
- Built-in Soundblaster 16 Vibra chipset

| Processor   | Screen               | RAM/HD    | Price  |
|-------------|----------------------|-----------|--------|
| Pentium 100 | 11.3" Dual Scan SVGA | 8/800MB   | \$3300 |
| Pentium 100 | 11.3" Dual Scan SVGA | 8MB/1.2GB | 3780   |
| Pentium 133 | 11.3" Active SVGA    | 8/800MB   | 4250   |
| Pentium 133 | 11.3" Active SVGA    | 8MB/1.2GB | 4730   |

### AST Ascentia J

- Integrated 14.4/14.4 Data/Fax modem
- PCI bus architecture with 256KB L2 cache memory
- 10.4" SVGA (800x600) resolution Dual Scan and Active display

| Processor   | Screen                   | RAM/HD  | Price  |
|-------------|--------------------------|---------|--------|
| Pentium 75  | 10.4" Dual Scan SVGA     | 8/500MB | \$2450 |
| Pentium 100 | 10.4" Dual Scan SVGA     | 8/800MB | 2840   |
| Pentium 100 | 10.4" Active Matrix SVGA | 8/800MB | 3120   |

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## COMPAQ

### Contura 430

| Processor  | Screen          | RAM/HD  | Price  |
|------------|-----------------|---------|--------|
| 486DX4/100 | 10.4" Dual Scan | 8/720MB | \$2369 |
| 486DX4/100 | 10.4" Active    | 8/720MB | 2939   |

### LTE 5000 Series

- Up to 120MHz Pentium power w/PCI bus & 256KB cache
- 32-bit PCI Local bus graphics
- SMD RAM exp. to 72MB
- Built-in 16-bit sound, microphone & 2 speakers
- MultiBay — holds CD-ROM, 2nd HDD, floppy, or 2nd battery
- Up to 1.35GB hard drives (2.7GB max. capacity)
- Built-in infrared for wireless communications
- Supports NiMH batteries
- Optional MPEG and TV video adapter

| Processor   | Screen          | RAM/HD     | Price  |
|-------------|-----------------|------------|--------|
| Pentium 75  | 10.4" Dual Scan | 8/510MB    | \$3799 |
| Pentium 75  | 11.3" Dual Scan | 8/810MB    | 4439   |
| Pentium 75  | 10.4" Active    | 8/810MB    | 4729   |
| Pentium 90  | 10.4" Active    | 8/810MB    | 5339   |
| Pentium 90  | 10.4" Active    | 8/810MB    | 5599   |
| Pentium 120 | 10.4" Active    | 8MB/1.35GB | 6149   |

Features include CD-ROM drive

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**UP TO  
120MHz  
PENTIUM  
with PCI BUS**



LTE 5000



**TEXAS  
INSTRUMENTS**



Extensa 560

### Extensa 560CD/560CDT

- 75MHz Pentium w/PCI bus & 256KB cache
- Built-in 4X CD-ROM drive
- Built-in 16-bit sound, microphone & speaker
- Integrated TouchPad pointer
- 10.4" Active Matrix & 10.4" Dual Scan
- Built-in infrared for wireless communications

| Processor  | Screen          | RAM/HD    | Price  |
|------------|-----------------|-----------|--------|
| Pentium 75 | 10.4" Dual Scan | 2/810MB   | \$3799 |
| Pentium 75 | 10.4" Active    | 8MB/1.2GB | 3699   |

### TravelMate 5130/5270/5300

| Processor   | Screen            | RAM/HD    | Price  |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------|--------|
| Pentium 90  | 10.4" Active SVGA | 8MB/1.2GB | \$3699 |
| Pentium 120 | 11.3" Active SVGA | 8MB/1.2GB | 4700   |
| Pentium 133 | 11.3" Active SVGA | 8MB/1.2GB | 5390   |

\*SVGA-800 x 600 resolution

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- 6X CD-ROM drive\*
- SoundBlaster compatible chip integrated on the system board
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- Super-fast 64-bit PCI Local Bus graphics
- Built-in MPEG support for full screen, full motion video
- 32-bit PCI I/O controller - fast disk performance
- LOADS of FREE software

\*\$310-\$370 (MSRP)

| Processor   | RAM/HD     | CD-ROM | Price  |
|-------------|------------|--------|--------|
| Pentium 120 | 8MB/1.2GB  | 4X     | \$1799 |
| Pentium 133 | 8MB/1.2GB  | 6X     | 1999   |
| Pentium 150 | 8MB/1.2GB  | 6X     | 2299   |
| Pentium 133 | 8MB/1.2GB  | 6X     | CALL   |
| Pentium 120 | 16MB/1.6GB | 6X     | 2199   |
| Pentium 133 | 16MB/1.6GB | 6X     | 2499   |
| Pentium 150 | 16MB/2GB   | 6X     | 2799   |
| Pentium 166 | 16MB/2GB   | 6X     | 2999   |

Monitors priced separately

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JBL Speakers**

Monitors priced separately Digital Starion



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## Digital Starion NEW! Windows 95 Multimedia Computers

- 4X CD-ROM Drive
- Up to Pentium 166 - blazing speed!
- PCI local bus - high speed graphics
- Unbelievable sound - SoundBlaster Pro-compatible, SW WaveTable, Premium JBL speaker system
- 28.8 fax/modem and advanced telephony features (differs by model)
- Loads of FREE software preinstalled

## All New Models!

| Processor   | RAM/HD     | CD-ROM | Price  |
|-------------|------------|--------|--------|
| Pentium 75  | 8MB/1.2GB  | 4X     | \$1599 |
| Pentium 100 | 8MB/1.2GB  | 4X     | 1759   |
| Pentium 100 | 16MB/1.6GB | 4X     | 2099   |
| Pentium 120 | 16MB/1.6GB | 4X     | 2299   |
| Pentium 133 | 16MB/1.6GB | 4X     | 2499   |
| Pentium 150 | 16MB/1.6GB | 4X     | 2599   |
| Pentium 166 | 16MB/1.6GB | 4X     | 2799   |

Monitors priced separately

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PENTIUM**

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## Advantage Adventure Multimedia (6X CD-ROM)

- 6X CD-ROM Drive
- 6X CD-ROM Drive w/3-disc CD changer (selected models)
- Advanced Telephony - 28.8 data/fax/modem, telephone answering system, and speaker phone (differs by model, call for details)
- Integrated 3-D surround sound (selected models)
- 64-Bit PCI Local Bus graphics
- AST Windows 95 ready-to-go software - 64-bit audio "SB"™
- Enhanced IDE interface-fast disk performance
- AST Lifetime technical support

## All New Models!

| Processor   | RAM/HD     | CD-ROM | Price  |
|-------------|------------|--------|--------|
| Pentium 100 | 16MB/1.2GB | 6X     | \$2020 |
| Pentium 133 | 16MB/1.2GB | 6X     | 2150   |
| Pentium 150 | 16MB/1.6GB | 6X     | 2370   |
| Pentium 100 | 16MB/1.2GB | 6X     | 2050   |
| Pentium 133 | 16MB/1.6GB | 6X     | 2300   |
| Pentium 150 | 16MB/2.1GB | 6X     | 2640   |
| Pentium 166 | 16MB/2.1GB | 6X     | 2830   |

\*w/3-disc CD changer  
Monitors priced separately

**WIN95  
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Monitors  
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AST Advantage Adventure

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PACKARD**

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HP DeskJet 340 Printer - C2655A

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3. Color kit

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HP LaserJet 5L printer (IBM, 4ppm, 600dpi) C3941A ..... 479.00

## HP InkJet Printers

HP DeskJet 340 printer (portable) C2655A ..... \$ 289.99

HP DeskJet 340 CV (bundle) C2664A ..... 329.99†

HP DeskJet 320 (bundle) C2637A/ABA ..... 229.00†

HP DeskJet 600 printer C2184A ..... 239.99

HP DeskJet 600C printer C4547A ..... 259.99†

HP DeskJet 600C printer C2146A ..... 359.99†

HP DeskJet 600C printer C4548A ..... 369.99†

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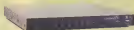
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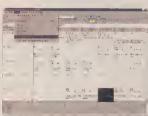
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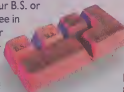
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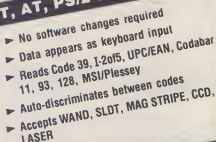
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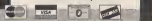


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SIEGEL V. SYNCRONYS, et al.  
Case No. 95 CH 12257SUMMARY NOTICE OF CLASS ACTION AND  
PROPOSED SETTLEMENTTO: ALL PERSONS WHO PURCHASED  
SOFTRAM OR SOFTRAM95

The purpose of this summary notice is to inform all Class Members of the proposed settlement of the lawsuit brought against Synconys Softcorp. in the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois. As explained in detail in a notice of class action and proposed settlement which will be distributed by mail (the "Mailed Notice"), if you purchased SoftRAM or SoftRAM95 on or before March 15, 1996, you are a member of the Settlement Class and your rights will be affected by the legal proceedings in this action. You are encouraged to read this Notice and the Mailed Notice in their entirety. You have a right to request exclusion from the Settlement Class but you must do so by June 15, 1996 by following the procedures outlined in the Mailed Notice. If you do not request exclusion from the Settlement Class, the terms of the settlement and judgment will be binding as to you.

Generally, the proposed settlement, which has been preliminarily approved by the Court, provides that in exchange for releasing all claims against Synconys Softcorp. and its distributors and retailers in connection with SoftRAM or SoftRAM95, Class Members may be entitled to (1) a full refund or a free software upgrade or free software, at the Class Member's election, and (2) coupons which may be used in connection with the purchase of other Synconys products. A hearing will be held on June 24, 1996 at 10:30 a.m. before the Honorable Aaron Jaffe in Courtroom #2405, Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois to determine whether the proposed settlement, including payment of attorneys' fees, is fair, reasonable and adequate, and whether a final judgment should be entered approving it and dismissing the lawsuit against Synconys. You may appear personally or by counsel; if you do not appear you will be represented by Class Counsel. To object, you must file a written objection, received by the Court by June 15, 1996.

IF YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE A MEMBER OF THE SETTLEMENT CLASS AND HAVE NOT RECEIVED THE MAILED NOTICE, YOU SHOULD REQUEST A COPY BY TELEPHONE (1-800-335-4059). PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT THE COURT FOR INFORMATION. ALL QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT SHOULD BE DIRECTED IN WRITING TO THE PLAINTIFFS' CLASS COUNSEL, LARRY D. DRURY, ESQ., 180 NORTH LA SALLE ST., #2416, CHICAGO, IL 60601, OR BEN BARNOW, ESQ., 105 W. MADISON, 22ND FLOOR, CHICAGO, IL 60602.

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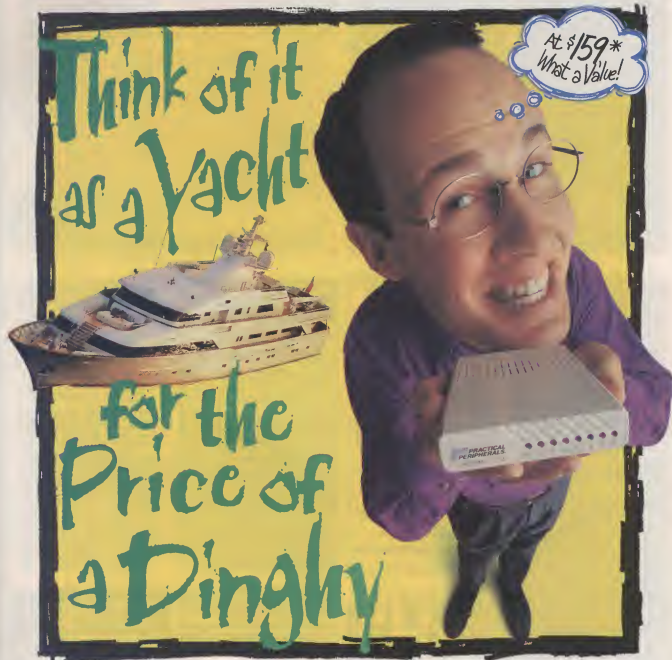
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While multifunction devices caused quite a stir last year, many people didn't think they would need a second printer. Lumina Office Products' Lumina 2096 (above right) features a 400-dpi scanner/fax/copier with all the software you'll need, and the ability to store up to 152 fax numbers. It doesn't include a printer, so it's very affordable (\$399 est. street price; 800-586-4620)....

### Internet for Everyone

Performance Technology's Instant Internet (below) is ideal for small offices ready to step up from analog modems.



Instant Internet attaches to any network running NetWare, and supports up to 50 users, by way of a 10Base-T Ethernet connection and a shared ISDN modem. It delivers great Internet performance and is easy to manage (\$4,195 est. street price; 800-784-4638)....

### Share Ideas Remotely

ForeFront Group's RoundTable lets you use existing Internet connections to meet others online to share video, audio, text, and graphics. Although you can't talk face to face, you can share files so everyone's on the same page. Check out a free evaluation copy at ForeFront's Web site, [www.ffg.com](http://www.ffg.com) (starting at \$495 list price; 800-867-1101)....



**Job Juggling:** The Lumina handles it all—scanning, faxing, and copying.

### Fish It Out

Forgot again where you saved a document? DEX's Enfish will find it for you. It indexes every piece of text in every file on your computer or network, and filters through to important information. It also serves as a completely open-ended way to share information through discussion threads and e-mail (\$200 est. street price; 818-577-0044). **JACK LYON**

*Reader Service Numbers:* Lumina 2096, 864; Instant Internet, 865; RoundTable, 866; Enfish, 867

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**VFX1 HeadGear / Forte Technologies /** (800) 436-7838 /  
\$99 est. street price / Reader Service No. 868



# Soho Usability Test

## Click-and-Save Snapshots

**F**rom stereo-rich audio to satellite television, digital technology has vastly improved the quality of what you see and hear. However, the current round of digital cameras won't leave you grinning—their image quality isn't quite there yet. Our usability testers unanimously agreed

that the five digital cameras we reviewed—Eastman Kodak's Digital Science DC50, Ricoh's RDC-1, Dycam's Dycam 10-C, Apple's QuickTake 150, and Connectix's QuickCam—don't come close to delivering the picture quality of a point-and-shoot film camera.

If you have the time, you'll get a better image by scanning a 35mm print on an inexpensive flatbed

images are due to differences in resolution, lens shape, and other camera features.

**Birds of a Feather** Each of these cameras internally stores at least a dozen images, includes a built-in flash, and lets you instantly develop photos by downloading the images to your computer via a standard serial cable. A few of the cameras also let you store images on credit-card-size

flash-memory PC cards.

Cameras that use PC cards have an advantage because the cards quickly transfer data from the camera to your PC.

If you're a camera buff, be forewarned that digital cameras aren't as

sophisticated as film cameras. Digital cameras don't have preflash—the rapid-fire flash that precedes an actual shot to help minimize the red-eye effect in photos. And none of the cameras have through-the-lens focusing, so expect trouble when centering close-ups. Only the RDC-1 lets you view shots stored in the camera. If you think of

what was state of the art in 35mm cameras about 15 years ago, you have a good idea of what digital cameras offer you.

### Perfect Paparazzi

Simply put, Kodak's DC50 delivers the most flash for the cash. Its standard zoom lens focuses down to 19 inches, but there's no provision for a special close-up lens. On the plus side, the DC50 stores images on industry-standard ATA-2 PC cards.

Operating the DC50 is simple: Slide open the lens cover, point, zoom, and then click. Transferring pictures to a PC is easy, too. The included PhotoEnhancer software automatically senses which port to use, and offers a wide array of touch-up options. However, testers faulted PhotoEnhancer for eschewing industry-standard terms in favor of descriptive but nonstandard ones.

Our testers singled out the DC50 for creating the most lifelike images, with very good detail and color fidelity. Like



**Clarity vs. Color:** The RDC-1 has great resolution, but color fidelity isn't solid.

**Ricoh RDC-1** / Ricoh Corp. / (800) 225-1899 / \$1,700 list price / Reader Service No. 870



the other cameras tested, the DC50 exhibited a significant yellow-to-green shift. But light flesh-tones came through surprisingly well.

### Camera Cornucopia

Roughly the size and weight of a cellular phone, Ricoh's RDC-1 slips easily into a shirt pocket, and has so many features it sits in a category by itself. It has a detachable LCD monitor to view stored pictures; the ability to record 5-second-long full-motion videos with sound; a television hookup (even SuperVHS); and a dial-up feature that lets you send pictures via modem to a CompuServe mailbox or to another RDC-1 camera.



**Digital Dilemma:** The Dycam 10-C's images could be better, and proprietary memory cards make it expensive to use.

**Dycam 10-C** / Dycam / (800) 883-9226 / \$999 est. street price / Reader Service No. 871



**Best Buy:** The DC50 is our testers' top choice for good, lifelike image quality at a reasonable price.

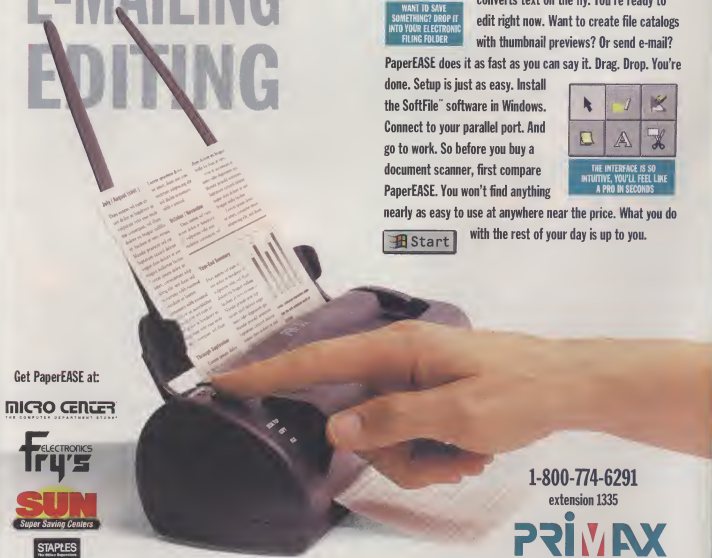
**Digital Science DC50** / Eastman Kodak / (800) 235-6325 / \$1,000 est. street price / Reader Service No. 869



scanner or having a developer turn out a PhotoCD. But if you don't want to buy a scanner, or you can't wait for one-hour photo processing, or your work calls for tons of electronic images, one of these cameras might be up your alley. Each sample photo is shown at highest resolution. Variations in

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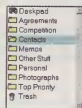
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# Soho Usability Test



**Quickly Outdated:** Once a leader, Apple's QuickTake has fallen behind, but it still offers a low price.

**QuickTake 150** / Apple Computer / (800) 538-9696 / \$479 est. street price / Reader Service No. 872

Our testers liked the RDC-1's simple design and well-marked buttons—until they tried to transfer pictures from the camera to a PC. At that point, the buttons take on different meanings, and their functions are often obscure.

When it comes to picture quality, the RDC-1 is a mixed



bag. Its resolution and clarity are the best of the bunch, but its color fidelity isn't foolproof. Our color tests showed the RDC-1 also had an annoying tendency to shift yellows into greens, and skin tones washed out in bright, natural light. Still, its

picture quality under most conditions was better than that of the other cameras. If money is not a primary concern, this is your camera.

## Deceiving Looks

Externally, Dycam's Dycam 10-C is virtually identical to Kodak's DC50. The buttons

work the same way; even the LCD panel with all the operating information behaves the same. But don't let appearances fool you: The cameras are quite different. On the plus side, the Dycam has a lens mount that holds various lenses, letting you focus down to 5 inches.

On the minus side, the

Dycam uses nonstandard PC Card storage that makes it much more expensive to use than other digital cameras. And our testers found that the Dycam's picture quality doesn't stand up to the DC-50's. Both

color fidelity and detail fall short.

**Quick Shot** How fast things change. Less than a year ago, Apple's QuickTake 150 represented the cutting edge in digital cameras. Now, it



**Eye to Eye:** The QuickCam is a solid, inexpensive black-and-white option.



**QuickCam** / Connectix / (800) 950-5880 / \$99 est. street price / Reader Service No. 873

## HOW IT WORKS DIGITAL CAMERAS



**Storage:** After an image is processed, it moves to the camera's memory, a removable memory card, or another storage medium. The images can then be transferred to a PC via a serial cable and loaded into an image-editing package or sent to a printer.

**Image Conversion:** The electrical impulses from the CCD pass through an analog-to-digital converter chip, which translates the CCD charges into a raw digital format. A digital signal processor (DSP) chip in the camera then adjusts the contrast and detail in the image, and compresses it for storage.

**Exposure:** Instead of focusing on objects through a lens as with most 35mm film cameras, digital cameras use fixed viewfinders. This makes focusing on a single object and controlling light exposure difficult. When you take a picture, the shutter behind the lens flips open and light lands on a photosensitive chip called a charge-coupled device (CCD), which records the image.

# Soho Usability Test



## Point and Pick

|  | Kodak DC50    | Ricoh RDC-1   | Dycam 10-C    | Apple QuickTake 150 | Connectix QuickCam |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Best Resolution* (dpi)                         | 756 by 504    | 768 by 576    | 640 by 480    | 640 by 480          | 320 by 240         |
| Highest-Resolution Pictures (with 8MB PC Card) | 63            | 81            | 43            | 16 (no card)        | Not applicable     |
| Lens (35mm zoom range)                         | 37mm to 111mm | 50mm to 150mm | 38mm to 114mm | 50mm (fixed)        | 38mm (fixed)       |

\*SHOWN IN SAMPLE PICTURES ON PAGES 284 AND 287.

falls way behind the rest. (Its bargain price may override some of its deficiencies, however.) The QuickTake 150 has no zoom ability, no PC Card storage, and its lens can focus down to only 4 feet.

There's one bright spot, though: Color fidelity on the QuickTake rivals that of Ricoh's RDC-1. But the QuickTake's resolution and clarity still don't compare.

### Pictures for Pennies

If you just need small black-and-white photos, and you can pose your subject near

your PC, why go through all the point-and-click rigmarole? Connectix's \$99 QuickCam—best known as an inexpensive videoconferencing camera—has all the hardware and software you need to take decent 64-grayscale pictures and save them in BMP or PCX format. All you do is hook up the camera to your parallel port, click on the Picture button, and you're done. What could be easier?

All things considered, your choice comes down to price and image quality.

Kodak's DC50 is the best all-around choice, with its outstanding quality and \$1,000 price. It's also our usability winner. For relatively high-resolution images and plenty of control, Kodak's DC50 is a good choice, but it'll cost you. If you're on a tight budget, Apple's QuickTake 150 is a no-frills but solid bargain. Finally, if you merely want to take pictures as a matter of record or need black-and-white images, Connectix's QuickCam will do a fine job. **WOODY LEONHARD**

## Lab notes

Our Usability Labs took hundreds of pictures, settling on two subjects that most clearly showed the differences between the cameras: a studio shot of a Macbeth ColorChecker Color Rendition Chart and a portrait of a person outside.

Our testers looked at the pictures as they appeared on a Nanao monitor. The monitor was hooked up to a Windows 95 PC running Micrografx's Picture Publisher and using Diamond's Stealth64 PCI card rigged for 24-bit color.

When our testers tried printing several of the reference shots, they found that the printers yielded different results. This detracted from their ability to judge image quality onscreen.

All of the cameras offer economy modes that increase the number of pictures you can store in a given amount of memory, but negatively affect image quality. These modes don't change the amount of information the camera gathers when you click on the shutter; instead, they control the degree of compression. Our usability testers also determined how easy it was to choose camera settings, transfer images to a computer, and clean out the cameras' storage to allow room for more shots.

## DECISION MAKER

WHICH CAMERA CLICKS FOR YOU?

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2 What's the next most important factor?

3 What else is important?

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Please answer questions below

1. Where do you use your computer? (Check one only):

☐ 1 Home ☐ 3 Both

2. What kinds of computers do you use? (Check all that apply):

☐ 1 IBM-Compatible Laptop ☐ 2 IBM-Compatible Desktop ☐ 3 MAC

3. Do you plan to buy any of the hardware or software mentioned below in the next three months?

(Check all that apply):

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1. PC

2. MAC

3. Laptop

4. Printer

5. Monitor

6. Disk/Type Back-up

7. Add-in Board

8. Modem

9. Input Device

10. Local Area Network

11. UPS

**SOFTWARE**

12. Accounting

13. Spreadsheet

14. Personal Finance

15. Desktop Publishing

16. Word Processor

17. Database Manager

18. Graphics

19. Utility

20. Communications

21. Windows 95

4. From which of the following sources do you purchase personal computer products?

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## INTERNET BROADCASTING

# I Want My Web TV!

It's Thursday night. Should you sink down in the couch for an evening of NBC's *Friends* and *Seinfeld*? Or would you rather launch Netscape's Navigator and surf the night away? If the merging of traditional broadcast and Internet technologies continues, you'll soon be able to choose both.

One of the biggest barriers to Web TV is bandwidth. The fastest analog modem tops out at just 33.6Kbps. Full-motion video at 30 fps requires more than 500Mbps. Alternatives include ISDN lines (128Kbps); T1 lines (1,544Kbps); and Asynchronous Transfer Mode, or ATM (622Mbps).

ISDN is popular, but it's still too slow and subject to rate increases. T1 lines are too expensive for consumers to lease. ATM, besides being cost-prohibitive, isn't widely available. A promising alternative is cable, which is ubiquitous, cheap, and fast—anywhere



**www.boobtube.com:** Coming not so soon to a Web browser and desktop PC near you—Web TV.

from 500Mbps to 3,000Mbps, provided you have a cable modem. In fact, TCI, Hearst, and Kleiner Perkins are working on a joint cable-Internet venture dubbed @Home. But bandwidth is just one part of the Web TV equation; compression technology is another.

Video-compression technologies such as Xing Technology's StreamWorks and VDOnet's VDOLive offer free video clients that work

with most Web browsers, bringing live video and audio to the Internet. StreamWorks sites include Bloomberg Business News, NBC, and Pentagon Records. Sites that use VDOLive include CBS News, Paramount Digital Entertainment, San Francisco's KPX television, and Club TV, a hip new service from Matra Hachette that brings the very best European television programs to the Web.

## ONE-MINUTE GUIDE

## Essential Internet Video Technologies

Get comfortable behind your favorite Web browser and check out video programming over the Internet. No, it's not quite TV, but some promising new technologies deliver decent broadcasting over the Web, even at 28.8Kbps. Bookmark this shortlist and tune in now.

**STREAMWORKS** Try Xing Technology's StreamWorks, a leader in digital-video and audio compression, as well as

includes a free client for receiving live and on-demand audio and video via TCP/IP (<http://www.streamworks.com>).

**VDOLIVE** VDOnet's scalable compression technology provides real-time video over the Internet, even at connection speeds as slow as 14.4Kbps. With VDOnet's VDOLive viewer, you can enjoy video from any browser if you have a standard analog modem. VDOLive works as either a helper application or as a plug-in to Netscape's Navigator. For

more info on plug-ins, see "Net Essentials: See What You've Been Missing on the Web," page 58 (<http://www.vdolive.com>).

**COMPRESSION POINTERS** Stuart Inglis's Compress Pointers, a handy one-stop Web site, has links to hundreds of compression-related sites, especially audio and video compression. Daily updates make this a must-see site (<http://www.cs.waikato.ac.nz/%7Eesinglis/compression-pointers.html>).

# I-Way Patrol

## Insites

**THE CYBERSPACE SURFER** Tabor Griffin Communications' Webster brings you a bounty of up-to-the-moment I-Way news. <http://www.tgc.com/webster.html>



**THE WEB RUNS THROUGH IT** Catch a premium selection of fly-fishing equipment, flies, materials, and travel opportunities at The Fly Shop. <http://www.ewwsome.com/theflyshop>

**WALT'S MAGIC KINGDOM** Mickey Mouse meets HTML at the new Walt Disney site. <http://www.disney.com>

**QUEST FOR CD-ROM** Trace thousands of CD-ROM titles at CD SourceLine. <http://www.omx.com/cds/>

**LIVE LONG AND PROSPER** MedAccess is one of several sites devoted to employee health-care-benefit information. <http://www.medaccess.com/home.html>

**SILVER SCREENING** Scan PolyGram's Real Life site for behind-the-scenes details about everything from production to distribution of



PolyGram films like *Jumanji* and *Mallrats*. <http://www.reallife.com/PFE>

**ROAD TRIPPIN'** Surf through every street in America without leaving your desktop using GeoSystem's MapQuest. <http://www.mapquest.com>

**FORE!** Want to play a round of 18 holes? Try Golf Travel Online for detailed information on courses from Pebble Beach to Saint Andrews.

<http://www.gto.com>

Free Stuff is written by DYLAN TWENEY. Downloads? E-mail [Dylan\\_Twenev@zd.com](mailto:Dylan_Twenev@zd.com). I-Way Patrol is written and edited by RICH SCHWERIN. I-Way report to share? Send e-mail to [Rich\\_Schwerin@zd.com](mailto:Rich_Schwerin@zd.com)

## Free Stuff!

Dylan Twenev: Check out [www.pccomputing.com](http://www.pccomputing.com)

### Get Those Title Bars in Line

Windows 95's Taskbar is always hiding title bars. Shovel fixes that problem.

**File:** SHOWIT.ZIP **Size/Time\*:** 15K/10 seconds

★★★★★

### Gore and Glory

In WarCraft, animated Orcs and humans battle each other to the death while defending vital resources.

**File:** WARCRFT.ZIP **Size/Time\*:** 1.4MB/15 minutes

★★★★★

### Descend into the Depths

Get Descend 2 and take on enemy pilots in mind-bending, fully 3-D underground dogfights.

**File:** DESCENT.ZIP **Size/Time\*:** 4.2MB/45 minutes

★★★★★

### Nuclear-Powered 3-D

Get the 3-D version of the shareware game Duke Nukem. Five levels of play mean lots of fun.

**File:** 3DUKE.ZIP **Size/Time\*:** 5MB/60 minutes

★★★★★

### Screen-Saver Wise Guy

Weird Wally is a cartoon guy who walks around your screen making random wisecracks. Odd, but fun.

**File:** WALY32.ZIP **Size/Time\*:** 153K/2 minutes

★★★★★

### How to Handle HTML Files

Microsoft's HTML Wizard adds convenient HTML-handling items to Explorer's context menus.

**File:** HTMWIZ **Size/Time\*:** 45K/30 seconds

★★★★★

### Scroll Up Your Windows

Stop minimizing your windows—scroll them up like shades with WinShade.

**File:** WSHADE.ZIP **Size/Time\*:** 140K/2 minutes

★★★★★

### Make Your Mouse More Useful

Whiskers lets you assign Windows actions and macros to mouse clicks and key combinations.

**File:** WHISK26A.ZIP **Size/Time\*:** 23K/15 seconds

★★★★★

### Memory Monitor

Use Memory Status to monitor available RAM and system resources under Windows 95.

**File:** MSTAT.ZIP **Size/Time\*:** 15K/10 seconds

★★★★★

## Package Deals: Timesaving Software Suites

### THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

*The X-Files is on TV only once a week. But with this Windows 95 theme, you can experience the creepy mystery of the show on your desktop as often as you like.*

**File:** XF-THEME.ZIP  
**Size/Time\*:** 619K/6 minutes

★★★★★

### INTERNET ASSISTANCE

*Want to put your documents, spreadsheets, and presentations on the Web? The easiest way is with Microsoft's Internet Assistants for Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.*

**File:** MSASSIST.ZIP  
**Size/Time\*:** 600K/6 minutes

★★★★★

### PLAY ON!

*Stay young! Have fun! You'll never get bored with this collection of games, including versions of go, mah-jongg, and a game reminiscent of the arcade favorite Asteroids.*

**File:** GAMEPAK.ZIP  
**Size/Time\*:** 620K/6 minutes

★★★★★

**Ratings:** ★★★★★ A T3 line, no charges. ★★★★★ The office T1 line after hours. ★★★ An ISDN line, all set up. ★★ A fast 28.8Kbps modem. ★ A 9,600bps modem with traffic.

\*ALL FILES ARE AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD FROM PC COMPUTING'S WEB SITE ([WWW.PCCOMPUTING.COM](http://WWW.PCCOMPUTING.COM)), AND IN OUR FORUM LIBRARIES ON COMPUSERVE (GO PCCONTACT) AND MICROSOFT NETWORK (GO PCCOMPUTING). DOWNLOAD TIMES ARE CITED AT 14 Kbps. ACTUAL TIMES MAY VARY.

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A black and white photograph of a man with short hair and a slight beard, wearing a dark button-down shirt over a white t-shirt. He is sitting at a desk, leaning back with his right hand raised and pointing his index finger upwards. In the background, there is a computer monitor, a keyboard, and some books, including one titled 'UNABRIDGED'.

**Earns \$65,000 from his spare bedroom.**

# Computer Life

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# HotList: David Letterman

BY JACK LYON

## Bookmarks of the Rich and Famous

Have we got a show for you. This month our spies braved the streets of New York, endured the freezing temperatures of the Ed Sullivan Theater, and stormed the home office in Sioux City, Iowa, just to get the ultraexclusive bookmark list of the master of late night, David Letterman. See what stupid Web tricks Dave's been up to, here and online ([www.pcomputing.com](http://www.pcomputing.com)).

### Famous Neighbors

The Unofficial  
Mujibur & Sirajul  
Home Page  
<http://www.gm1.com/~maju6406/ms/ms.html>

### Stupid Pet Tricks

Blue Dog Can  
Count  
<http://haa.inl.onu.edu:5550/bdf.html>

### Stupid Human Tricks

America's Funniest  
Home Videos  
<http://www.gigaplex.com/wow/celebs/saget.htm>

### Stupid Hairline Tricks

Instant Hair Plus  
<http://www.primenet.com/~glende/HPL.html>

### Hey Kids, Do You Like That Rock 'n' Roll?

Yahoo's Musician  
List  
<http://www.yahoo.com/Entertainment/Music/Artists/>

### Closing the Gap

Dentistinfo.com  
<http://www.dentistinfo.com/>

### Mom's Summer Vacation Plans

1996 Olympic  
Games Home Page  
<http://www.atlanta.olympic.org/>

### Why Them Watermelons Burst

Newton's Third Law  
<http://dtp.com.burp/ke.net/lindeman/newton/newton.html>

### Wardrobe for the Show

What to Look for in  
Winter Coats  
<http://www.charm.net/~jakes/wintercoats.html>

### Oprah, Uma

The Uma Thurman  
Home Page  
<http://www.1ay.ac.uk/~mccs/1cab/index.html>

### Uma, Oprah

People: Get Ready  
for Oprah Online  
<http://www.in.com/net/day/simba/95092808.html>

### Fan Club Members

Connecticut State  
Police  
<http://www.li.net/~4dica/frequencies/Connecticut/cldpodes.html>

### More Fan Club Members

The Stalkers  
<http://www.citycity.com/jein-in-teller/stalkers.html>

### Kicked Out of the Academy

The Interactive  
Guide to the Oscars  
<http://oscars.guide.com/>

### Hey NBC, Smoke This

International  
Fellowship of  
Cigar & Pipe Lovers  
<http://www.inet.com/bahamas/default.htm>

### You Call That a Monologue?

The Tonight Show  
with Jay Leno  
<http://www.nbc.com/entertainment/shows/tonight/index.html>

### Connecticut to New York in Under 20

DeLorme's National  
Speed Limit Map  
<http://www.delorme.com/newsmaps/speed4.htm>

### Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?

Upcoming Guests  
on the Late Show  
[http://pmwww.cs.vu.nl/public\\_links/Information/TV\\_radio\\_movie/Letterman/late\\_show\\_us.html](http://pmwww.cs.vu.nl/public_links/Information/TV_radio_movie/Letterman/late_show_us.html)

### Tens by the Hundreds

David Letterman  
Top Ten Lists  
<http://jmgenth.uuc.edu/extra/t10s/>

### by League It Ain't

Welcome to Ball  
State University  
<http://www.bsu.edu/home.html>

### And Now, a Word from Our Sponsor

The Westinghouse  
Home Page  
<http://www.westinghouse.com/>

## Top 10 Reasons Why Dave Surfs the Web

10. Psycho Fans Can't Break into My Home Page  
The Late Show with David Letterman  
<http://www.cbs.com/lateshow/ateshow.html>
9. Can Buy Canned Hams in Bulk  
Mahogany Smoked Meats  
<http://www.smokedmeats.com/>
8. Got to Make Fun of Canadians  
The Royal Society of Canada  
<http://atl2.library.utoronto.ca/www/rsoc/index.htm>
7. Proud Member of the Larry "Bud" Melman Fan Club  
The Calvert DeForest Home Page  
<http://www.calvertdeforest.com/>
6. The Web Cam  
Wearable Wireless Web Cam and  
Telemetry  
<http://www.whip.media.mit.edu/~stave/netcam.html>
5. Chats with Fellow Madonna Admirers  
The Madonna Fan Newsgroup  
[news.aif.fan.madonna](http://news.aif.fan.madonna)
4. Happy Birthday to Me  
Drew Barrymore Home Page  
<http://www.wfu.edu/~david/drew/>
3. Buttafuoco!  
The Joey Buttafuoco Odyssey  
<http://anansi.panix.com/users/dirs/freddy/hrip/Start.html>
2. Three Words: Fun with Velcro!  
The Story of Velcro  
<http://www.nipie.com/gf/...3742c7c/velcro/story.html>
1. Help O.J. Find the Real Killers  
Golf Course Database  
<http://www.traveler.com/golf/>



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December 5, 1995  
Dell Dimension P100T

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MAGAZINE  
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- 128KB L2 Cache
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**DELL LATITUDE Xpi P120D**  
120MHz PENTIUM PROCESSOR

- 10.4" Dual Scan Color Display
- 8MB RAM (40MB Max RAM)
- 256KB L2 Cache
- 540MB Removable Hard Drive (1.2GB Max)
- Smart Lithium Ion Battery with Advanced Power Management
- 32-bit Local-bus Video, 1MB Video RAM
- 2 Type II/1 Type III PCMCIA Slots
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- Extendable 1 Year Warranty
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- 8MB RAM (40MB Max RAM)
- 256KB L2 Cache
- 540MB Removable Hard Drive (1.2GB Max)
- 14 XJACK Modem
- Smart Lithium Ion Battery with Advanced Power Management
- 32-bit Local-bus Video, 1MB Video RAM
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  - 64-bit PCI 2MB DRAM Video (128-bit 4MB VRAM Max)
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- 15TX Trinitron Monitor (13.7" v.i.s.)
- 64-bit PCI 2MB DRAM Video  
(128-bit 4MB VRAM Max)

• 5X Multi-session EIDE CD-ROM Drive

- MS® Office Professional with  
Bookshelf for Windows® 95
- Microsoft® Windows 95/  
30 Days Free Support/MS Mouse
- Upgrade to 512KB Pipeline Burst  
Cache for only \$85 more.

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Dell Dimension  
XPS P166c

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# UNTIL NOW, ONLY ROCK STARS HAD GROUPIES.

The Dell Dimension XPS P166c is the latest member of Dell's Dimension XPS line, which has garnered several Editors' Choice awards. Boosted by 512K of external cache and top-of-the-line graphics capabilities, the Dimension XPS P166c is the current performance and value leader.

The Dimension XPS P166c makes the most of Intel's 166MHz Pentium processor at a competitive price and stands as the system to beat.—/M  
Dimension XPS P166c. Estimated

PC MAGAZINE  
1/23/96



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DELL DIMENSION LEADS PACK OF 166MHz PENTIUM DESKTOP SYSTEMS

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PC WEEK  
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